1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

[History of Haiti in 17th-18th Centuries - The Haitian White Population]

Revolution."[13] St. Mery also records the importation and sale in 1750 of more than five hundred Natchez Indians from New France (Louisiana) "as well as others at a later date, both from Louisiana and Canada."[14]

A final class of settler must be mentioned, whose coming is reported to have given a better tone to the drab picture of Haitian life. This class was composed of members of the French nobility, who in their new home attempted to maintain the standards which characterized and regulated their lives in France. Unlike many of the earlier inhabitants, to whom the difficult life of the planter did not appeal, the nobles tended to continue their status as country gentlemen in their new environment, and, by establishing plantations, to reproduce in so far as was possible, their situation in France as a group of landed proprietors. As a result, there soon grew up between these planters living on their estates and the population of the cities and towns the same distinctions of caste and the same blind rivalry which, before the Revolution, separated the French country squires and the city dwellers in France itself.[15]

The existence of these two classes within the white population of the colony, which is commented upon by many writers of the period, must have presented to the Negro slaves strikingly different views of the life of the whites. In a manuscript of Moreau de St. Mery, at present in the archives of the Ministry of Colonies in Paris, a group of some two hundred of these gentlefolk who in 1763 lived in the region of what today is Cap-Haitien, in northern Haiti, is spoken of as that of a special class, and their existence is contrasted with that of the city folk. Living on their plantations, with the cultivation of which they were exclusively occupied, their mode of life was different from that of the inhabitants of the cities and towns, where were found dealers in wholesale produce, officers of the crown, lawyers, solicitors, and merchants. Some forty years later another writer, writing from the point of view of the

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

[History of Haiti in 17th-18th Centuries—
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175 563 565 369 [463] planters and expressing their contempt for the townspeople, speaks of the towns as existing primarily to serve the needs of these country squires as centers for the storage and disposal of their produce: "There are found merchants, artisans, judges, recorders, solicitors, notaries, bailiffs, doctors. But one finds neither nobles, men of property, nor persons of wit and perception." [16]

175 324 563 The physical aspect of the cities had little to recommend them, especially since the utter lack of sanitation made for extreme uncleanliness in all Haitian centers. This fact is of special interest in the light of the frequent references to this trait of Haitian cities in the writings of those Europeans who described the life of independent Haiti. Invariably in such accounts the littered state of the streets, even in the capital, is stressed, and tendered as evidence of the absence of civilization in this Negro Republic.[17] Even though occasional mention is made that this state of affairs existed before the Revolution, nowhere, whether in St. John or in the later writers who date from the time of the occupation of the country by the United States Marine Corps, is there any realization that this condition antedates the independence of Haiti. The cleanliness of Africans in Africa wherever the natives have ready access to water has been well attested, and is still true in those regions from which the ancestors of the people of Haiti principally derive.

175 591 321 368 563 Yet some aspects of life in the towns livened the picture of Haitian colonial existence. Outstanding were the opportunities offered by these centers for social intercourse, and even for intellectual and artistic stimulation of a kind, such as was afforded by the famous *Cercle des Philadelphes* of Cap Français, dedicated to literary, philosophical, and, above all, to political discussions.[18] Masonic lodges, later taken over by the Negroes and today of appreciable importance in Haiti, were also instituted by the French, the first having been founded at the Cap in 1740.[19] Purely social meeting-places, such as public

1; Herskovits E-4, 8 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

attitudes of these writers were in the main far from sympathetic toward Haiti, and their interests extended but little to the customs of the great masses of Haitians. That the fear of slavery was still alive in the early part of the nineteenth century is apparent from an incident related by Mackenzie; " that, some decades later, the sense of racial differences continued to exist is evident from folk-sayings about the characteristics of whites, mulattoes, and Negroes recorded by St. John." The concept of rank seems to have maintained itself in its full flavor, with no lack of social classes in Haitian urban society and no lack of vigor in perpetuating the earlier prejudices of caste.

The majority of the population remained on the land, for by 1850 the great estates had been completely broken up, and were cultivated in the main by small concessionaires. The dress of these country inhabitants seems to have remained much as it had been under French control, and the emphasis on good manners that so marks African social intercourse had been retained to such an extent that St. John, no admirer of the Haitian people, was forced to remark upon it." Markets which were conducted in African fashion had been established, and these were supplemented by itinerant peddlers. The institution of *placage*, a reconciliation of African plural marriage with the monogamy of European custom, of which more will be said in a later chapter, was known in the early days of independence. The rites of birth and death were marked with their special ceremonies, and in both instances it can be seen that the African elements of the cultural heritage were not being forgotten. Dancing continued as the principal form of recreation, and to the traditional dances, which still persist, were added European styles."

Above all, African religious customs were being observed. *Vodun* rites continued to flourish and magic was practiced as in the days preceding independence, as is to be seen from the notorious and all too often repeated tale of the " Congo bean

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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manufactured in the valley of Mirebalais, but elsewhere in Haiti men are the potters. The African knowledge of iron-working has been lost, but there are those who repair iron implements and the great pots used in making sugar, and those who work in tin. Some men specialize in making rope, others in building the mills which crush the sugar-cane. Not everyone knows how to make *clairin*, the strong drink of the peasants, and some do nothing except distill this. Painters are found who paint the larger houses built in the town, as well as those occasionally erected by the more prosperous peasants in the countryside. The calling of the mason is a well-established one. These craftsmen build the walls of the more pretentious stone houses, but more particularly find their time taken up in the erection of tombs.

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With economic specialization goes a stratification of Haitian society, roughly drawn, but based on prestige and the command of economic resources, in which the following classes are informally recognized: [9] There are the *pauvres*, indigent folk, who for some reason have forfeited or otherwise lost their family connections and whatever they may have owned and now must actually beg to obtain enough to eat. One finds but few of these except in the larger centers; in Mirebalais they number not more than five or six. One such is an elderly man who originally came from another part of the island, lost what he owned, and when he became deaf was no longer able to earn a living. He was occasionally set at some menial task such as carrying water or gathering firewood. In another category are those known as *malheureux* — folk who are usually, though not always, incompetent, but who are generally regarded as unlucky. They may work hard on their land, but their crops fail or yield meagerly; they may obtain a job, but something goes wrong with it — the work is temporary, or they cannot collect the wages due them, or illness follows every period of employment.[10]

The second group comprises the middle class. This class

1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

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contains such an overwhelming proportion of the population that no special term is applied to its members. They are comfortably situated, according to Haitian standards, living frugally on their habitations with their families where their lives follow an equitable course, and through them the body of Haitian culture flows, for they are its principal carriers. In the third class is included the *gra nègre* and the *grand nègre*. The first is a man of wealth and position, the owner of a large plantation, and frequently also a former high officer in the Haitian army or in the old Cacobrigades, or a man who may have successfully stood for local or national offices. The *grand nègre* is conceived in Mirebalais to be a man of spiritual power, as represented in the more active and renowned priests of the vodun cult and the successful practitioners of magic. Together, the two categories maybe thought of as constituting the outstandingly successful members of the community, in contrast to the first class, which includes its outstanding failures.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

treatment. In the absence of sufficient analytic material on the intervening years since his book was written, a prefatory note such as this can do little more than comment on Haitian society, either in terms of its present design or in terms of the recent events that may have modified it.

The central thesis of Leyburn's book is that Haitian society is sharply divided into two segments, and that the national institutional structure is such that no significant alteration in that division has occurred in the entire course of Haiti's history as a sovereign nation. At the base of the society is the rural agricultural sector, making up perhaps as much as 95 per cent of the population; at the top the elite, which dominates the governmental apparatus and all national institutions. These two segments of the society differ, in Leyburn's view, in all important regards: level of income, source of income, education, language, religion, social forms, values and attitudes, and all else. By carefully describing the history of Haitian society from the eve of the revolution until the midst of the United States occupation, he reveals both the origin of this vast social cleavage and the various means employed for its perpetuation. Leyburn was so impressed by the gap which separated yeomanry and elite that he chose to label these social segments castes rather than classes. Members of the elite earn their livings as rentiers, merchants, professionals, and in government, and never engage in manual labor of any sort. They are predominantly urban in residence; their sons attend private lower schools, and then go on to higher education, usually abroad. They are French-speaking, although they also speak Creole, Haiti's national language. Elite religion is Catholicism, elite forms of marriage and domestic organization are "legitimate" and "western." Elite members view themselves as a kind of aristocracy, and feel little commonality in their sharing of Haiti and of Haitian history with the yeomen.

In sharp contrast, the yeomanry is rural, poor, works the land, is illiterate and Creole-speaking only, believes in vodoun rather than in orthodox Catholicism, usually marries by common law and is sometimes polygynous, and remains substantially isolated from the outer world. Finally and importantly—though its particular significance is changing—the elite differs from the rural sector in that the countryman is predominantly negroid in phenotype, while members of the elite are prevailingly lighter-skinned.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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Leyburn noted that the United States occupation affected the nature and rigidity of the barriers separating the yeomanry from the elite. For instance, he calls attention to the fact that the presidents elected during the United States occupation were light-skinned members of the elite. It seemed almost inevitable that, when the North Americans sought men through whom to prosecute their plans for "stabilizing" Haiti, they would settle on educated and worldly politicians, men who were both sufficiently trained and sufficiently pliant for the task. That these men were predominantly light-skinned was a corollary aspect of Haitian social history. In this way Washington played some part in reinforcing and expanding elite power; and herein lies a paradox with which the author of *The Haitian People* has dealt well. While the elite had been able to maintain their wealth and power in Haiti for nearly a century, the presidential succession before the United States occupation had largely been one of military chieftains, principally dark-skinned men from the north of the Republic. Michel Oreste, who had ruled for nine months in 1913–14, was the first civilian to be chosen president in Haiti's entire history up to that time; and Sudre Dartiguenave (1915–22), the North Americans' choice, was the first president since 1879 who was both a southerner and light-skinned. From the last quarter of the nineteenth century until the occupation, in other words, Haiti's presidents were almost entirely dark-skinned northern provincial leaders who literally seized power by invading Port-au-Prince and deposing their predecessors.

Hence, in describing the separation between elite and yeomanry, it is essential to notice the traditional special role of the military, with its particular overtones of color. Here was one institutional feature of Haitian society which was not directly dominated by the elite, and through which nonelite folk were able to attain special power. But in Haiti's case it is significant that the army itself was not firmly institutionalized; regional warlords, rather than a centralized officer corps, made the decisions. Leyburn cites Auguste Magloire, who enumerated *sixty-nine* "important" revolutions between 1806 and 1879; had this enumeration gone forward, it would have been much longer. Of Haiti's twenty-four chief executives between 1807 and 1915, only eight were in office for a period equal to their elected terms, and seventeen were deposed by revolution. Before the United States occupation, then, the continuing power of the elite could be seen as somewhat separate from the succession of nonelite generals who seized office over the years.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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The financing of these many revolutions was usually provided by foreign merchants, bent upon installing a government that would grant them special economic concessions (Munro, 1964:326–31). The United States occupation ended this doleful succession of regimes and, by throwing its weight to the elite, by suppressing military activity in the countryside, and by reforming the army, the United States gave a new meaning to the separation of the elite and the yeomanry. Leyburn's interpretation is consistent with these events; yet some Haitian scholars have differed with Leyburn's analysis.

In a lengthy review article, the dean of Haitian historians, Dr. Jean Price-Mars (1942:1–50), questions the applicability of the term "caste" to the social groupings of Haitian society. He notes that Haitian law after the revolution never legitimized any distinction on grounds of physical type, unlike a society such as the United States—that in fact, the very basis of Haitian polity was the absence of such distinctions. Furthermore, Leyburn's interpretation is qualified by the fact that the elite and the rural masses are not entirely distinctive physically. In some parts of rural Haiti, particularly in the southern peninsula, there are many light-skinned people; and many individuals who qualify as members of the elite on all other counts are very dark in appearance. The fact that being "Negro" or "white" in Haiti is viewed as a matter of degree, rather than of kind, complicated by all the other criteria of social position employed in drawing distinctions, has important implications for the way social barriers have operated in that country.*

Leyburn did not contend that all the effects of the United States occupation were in the direction of increasing the gap between the ELITE AND THE PEASANTRY.

* In this regard, Haiti is aligned with most of Latin America, in contradistinction to the United States, where many persons believe that "one drop of Negro blood" [sic] makes a "Negro." The failure of North Americans to distinguish between sociological and genetic categories of physical type has led to considerable confusion in their dealings with Latin America and in their understanding of Latin American societies. North American race prejudice at its most extreme sees color as the primary basis for social ranking, and no individual accomplishment (for instance, in terms of economic or intellectual success) can overshadow the inferior status unalterably bestowed by certain physical traits. Haitians—and generally all Latin Americans—social distinctions do not rest solely on considerations of physical type; a black skin does not "doom" an individual if his attainments make him otherwise the equal of his lighter-skinned fellow citizens. Hence, it might be argued that the term "caste" would be more appropriate when applied to the Negro people of the United States (regardless of phenotype, and including those "Negroes" who are sociologically identified with the Negro people even if their physical appearance is demonstrably Caucasian) than when applied to the peoples of Latin America.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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elite and the yeomanry. For instance, he calls attention to one unanticipated (but inevitable) result of the occupation in this connection: the large number of children whose fathers were United States Marines, and whose mothers were members of the Haitian rural masses. In this way the occupation contributed to the growth of the physically intermediate population of Haiti, especially among rural folk, and thus perhaps to some bridging of the gap between yeomen and elite. Much more important, by its contributions to a broadening of the educational system, the occupation enabled talented black-skinned youths to improve themselves and to acquire new aspirations.

Recent economic and political developments in Haiti, through the period 1941–57, have contributed grounds for modification of the Leyburn interpretation. Though Leyburn predicted that "for the present and near future it is safe to say that there will be no more black non-élite presidents" (p. 101), subsequent developments soon proved him wrong. In January 1946, the government of elite member Elie Lescot fell under military pressure. A junta consisting of Franck Lavaud, Antoine Levelt, and Paul Magloire facilitated the installation of Dumarsais Estimé as president. Estimé was a dark-skinned man from the countryside (the village of Verettes, near St. Marc, in west-central Haiti), who had received a good education, served as a minister in the Vincent cabinet and, as a deputy, married a lighter-skinned woman whose family's elite membership was secure. Estimé might well be considered a self-made member of the elite, but he was not born into it, and his accession to power was the political expression of new possibilities in Haitian life.

The changes Estimé's regime symbolized were rooted in the intellectual resistance to the United States occupation and in the search for a Haitian identity in the face of that occupation. The strangely easy domination that the United States wielded over Haitian society for several decades, and the relatively unexploitative but patronizing administration it provided, ended forever a fantasy that had gripped Haitian intellectuals for more than a century. The world of 1804, when a bloodied but defiant Haiti could bar by force of arms Napoleon's dreams of a New World empire (and assist indirectly thereby in the territorial expansion of a still weak United States) had vanished. The time when a Pétion could aid, protect, and politically influence a sick and tired Simón Bolívar was long gone. The world had changed, while Haiti, the Haitians learned under their North

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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attitudes toward French culture in all of its expressions, and by a new feeling of kinship for the peoples and cultures of Africa.

The variety of views expressed by Haitian intellectuals was colored by differences no more subtle than those characteristic of the intellectuals of any other country in the Caribbean region—even though North American observers unfortunately persist in treating such differences as politically irrelevant. There were those spokesmen who continued to embrace French culture and to reject "Africanism," only deploring the North American presence in Haiti. Others embodied their views in a staunchly Haitian nationalism and, as they began to view their country in a new light, invested the Haitian folk with an unrealistically romantic picturesqueness. Still others fastened upon the African theme with special intensity, and thereby gave a strong racist tinge to their nationalism.

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Not surprisingly, perhaps, anthropology came to be seen as an important means for giving Haitians an accurate—that is, an "inside"—picture of their own society; a number of young ethnologists, mainly self-trained, began to publish works on Haitian culture. Soon anthropology was pressed into a political mold, anticipating similar developments in other "colonial" countries. The first novels purporting to deal with the common people, though sometimes tinged with idealized preconceptions of rural society, were published; and an impressive number of competent young poets devoted themselves to aesthetic explorations of the Haitian spirit. Haitian cultural and intellectual life, in short, was taken up with the rediscovery of Haiti and its people.

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But the Estimé regime did not produce changes in the economic structure of Haitian society of importance proportionate to the national cultural renascence. Even those modifications in the class structure for which Estimé is sometimes given credit might not have occurred, were it not for educational reforms that had begun in the 1930s and the beneficial effects of Haiti's prosperity of the mid-1940s. What Estimé could do was to open the ranks of an inefficiently large bureaucracy to able, if sometimes inadequately trained, newcomers of poor rural antecedents.

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At the same time, as the Combaire-Sylvains have suggested (1950: 179–89), a qualitatively different class group was beginning to emerge in Port-au-Prince during Estimé's presidency, and the presence of such a group suggests that new economic forces were faintly stirring.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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175 These newcomers in the class structure enjoyed regular urban em-
565 ployment, were mostly literate and legally married, and harbored strong ambitions for the education of their children. Such persons were certainly not elite members, and their behavior (as, for instance, in their preference for speaking Creole rather than French) showed it; yet they were not part of the rural masses, nor merely an example of Marx's *Lumpenproletariat*. Yet significance of this new group for the Leyburn "caste" theory of the elite is considerable. Even today, if such persons lapse into poverty, their ideology will continue to matter politically. Estimé's regime also loosed new political trends, [467] since at first some encouragement was given to labor unions, and the [362] construction of urban low-cost housing was undertaken. We are unable to measure the long-term effects of these changes, but their reality raises some questions about the rigidity that Leyburn's analysis imputed to Haitian social structure.

175 In May 1950, after an unsuccessful bid to extend his term of office
669 illegally, Estimé's regime was toppled, again by a military junta. To
643 power came Paul Magloire, the first military figure to become chief
159 executive since the start of the United States occupation. Like Estimé before him, Magloire symbolized certain effects of the occupation upon Haiti's social and political structure and the way that structure was continuing to change. Magloire's origins were not within the elite, to judge by the traditional criteria. He was a black man, and from the north; born in Quartier Morin, he associated himself with the elite of the north coast port of Cap Haïtien, Haiti's second largest city. By marriage to a "Capoise," whose family status was much higher than his own, and by a successful career in the military during the occupation, Magloire penetrated elite circles. As commander of the Palace Guard, he had been a member of the junta that ousted Lescot in 1946, replacing him with Estimé. In 1950, when Magloire became president, after the army had forcibly discharged both houses of the legislature, he apparently had the support of the elite and of the business class, if not of the popular forces that had backed Estimé.

175 Magloire may be said to have moderated considerably the intensity
643 of Haitian politics, and his administration was not marked by so sharp an ideological concern with the relative roles of elite and countryman. Times were good, and levels of life, both in the countryside [433] and in the capital, were probably as high as they had been at any time in Haitian history. Certain economic gains were made in the tourist

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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same century in which Haiti withdrew. The yeomanry of Haiti in the nineteenth century was hence able to develop a traditionalism of unusual firmness and persistence.

This traditionalism, however, has had a high price. The economic productivity of the rural cultivator has not risen; it can be argued convincingly that poor land use, erosion, and population growth have meant lower levels of consumption for the common people in 1966 than obtained a hundred years or more ago. The rural masses, though overwhelmingly consisting of landholders, have been unable to break out of a stagnation that is economic as well as cultural. Such stasis has been based to some extent on the limited responsiveness of the rural folk to outside stimulus. But also important in maintaining the past is the national institutional system that took on its characteristic shape after 180[illegible], and under which the rural masses still live. That system, the origins of which Leyburn has examined and assessed with such care, is controlled, as we have seen, by a numerically small segment of the national population that is markedly distinct from the yeomanry itself.

The nature and internal differentiation of the elite needs much more study, though it seems clear already that it is by no means a single solidary class embracing all but the yeomen. Whatever the structure of the elite, the relationship between the yeomen on the one hand and the real holders of power on the other must be understood if one is to understand Haiti. The yeoman is defined in terms of the elite; he is dependent upon it and subject to it. This is what is meant when it is said that the yeomanry, like the elite, forms only a part-society. Yet without the yeomen, there would be no elite. The elite live by controlling and taxing the rural masses, and find their sustenance and their power in rural productivity. Elite and yeomen, then, are bound together in unequal but interdependent relationships in Haiti as they are in other less developed societies of a similar kind. In such cases, the political role of the yeomanry is usually minor, and few opportunities may arise for the expansion of its political strength. If the yeomanry fails to increase its productivity in ways that enable it to control more of its own surpluses, its role in affecting national political decisions may grow narrower rather than wider, and this ominous possibility has become a worldwide phenomenon. It becomes more intensified wherever industry and trade grow, unaccompanied by parallel growth in yeoman productivity or in new and more widely representative national institutions.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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That the separateness of yeomanry and elite had visible and sociologically important expression in physical type in Haiti was a clear consequence of the history of that country. But the traditional preponderant light skins at the top of the structure and the preponderant darkness at its base are less important than the domination of the total structure, and of the institutional means for changing it, by a mere fraction of the national population. It is the *power* of the elite which has mattered through time; its physical appearance has been only a historically derived expression of that power. Such a balance of politically weak masses against numerically sparse power holders is common, perhaps particularly in the "less developed world"; but each such case has certain special characteristics. Haiti's special nature is not simply in its being a yeoman country, and one in which a small group dominates the mass. As a rural, agrarian, unindustrialized, politically sovereign, and quasi-capitalistic country, Haiti shares much with other lands; but in each regard its own particularity needs to be assessed.

The rurality of Haiti is extreme, not simply because there are no concentrations of population in excess of 25,000 except for Port-au-Prince and Cap Haïtien but also because towns of intermediate size are few in number, and the urban concentrations in the country's two cities are substantially of relatively recent rural origin. Port-au-Prince dominates the Republic in all of its economic, political, and social activities. Furthermore, the rural towns have been losing to the capital, not gaining from it. Until the United States occupation, the larger towns of the coast, such as Jérémie, Jacmel, and St. Marc, were united economically with each other, and to some extent with the capital, by a lively coastwise shipping system, and the inland towns were tributary to those of the coast. The growth of inland transport during the occupation strengthened the interior towns while coastwise shipping declined, but the capital grew even more important as the sole economic center of the Republic. Since the 1940s, the rapid deterioration of the road system has left both inland and coastal towns enfeebled; only Port-au-Prince has remained strong.

The dominion of Port-au-Prince is firm, and there is no focus of power in the countryside that can counteract it. Those few foreign enterprises in Haiti that base themselves outside the capital city use local port facilities (e.g. Miragoâne for Reynolds Aluminum, Cap Haïtien for the sisal plantations of the north) and do not affect the development of the interior transport.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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The major effect of the North

American pressure seems to have been to make possible a much more telling centralism in political control than had been operative in Haiti at any time since the fall of the Christophe regime; and the consequences of this change are still being felt.

Small-scale rural cultivators are famous for their tendency to confine their consumption to culturally conventionalized levels—that is, to live as their predecessors lived before them. Though they are involved in commercial spheres larger than the communities in which they live, they seek to limit that involvement and to maintain their cash expenditures at a low level. It is in this sense that Haiti might be called a "quasi-capitalistic" society. To put it another way, yeomen of this sort do not seek to change or to expand their production—rather, they aim to conserve a way of life set by tradition. The ideology of resistance to social and cultural change is one of the major obstacles to development; but it would be rash to damn such an ideology without reflection. In Haiti, for instance, there has long been pressure upon the rural masses to expand their production of coffee, the major export crop. However, this pressure has not been accompanied by any serious grass-roots attempt to improve coffee production or to offer genuine incentives to the cultivators. The yeomanry has no assurance at all that any expansion of effort will lead to gains *for them*; and they are little prepared to invest such effort merely because they are told that it will be good for Haiti. In fact, it is likely that the production of subsistence crops has expanded in recent years at the cost of coffee production, for the yeoman knows that he can at least be sure of eating and of selling locally such crops as maize, sorghum, and yams, regardless of what may happen in Port-au-Prince or to the world coffee market. This view, combined with the yeoman's painfully acquired distrust of those who prate at length concerning his welfare, has meant a virtual stagnation of agricultural export production, even though the whole land quite literally depends on this production in order to progress.

The effect of this rural resistance is to create an apparent very sharp difference in goals between countryman and bureaucrat. It is perfectly understandable that the countryman should fail to see the connection between heightened coffee production and a higher level of public welfare and social services. His experiences hardly persuade him that it is his surplus-producing capacity that underlies the kind and quality of public institutions with which the state provides him.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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241 Nor does his effort in producing more and better cash crops translate
565 itself directly into higher consumption, since he has no say in setting
185 the price for his coffee. Under the circumstances, it is naïve to sup-
433 pose that "education" alone can make the yeoman's role in economic or political development a more active one. The disposition to maintain a habitual level of consumption, rather than to believe that an increase in productivity will result in expanding services or improved consumption, is difficult to change; and the quasi-capitalistic quality of Haitian agricultural production is merely one way of saying as much. Economic change, in this sense, has to depend partly on changes in attitudes toward production. Until an agricultural extension service worthy of the name is able to make a massive attack on the shortcomings of yeoman cultivation in Haiti, this conservatism will perpetuate itself. And agricultural extension will not be able to wage this battle for change—even when its services become adequate in quality and quantity—unless the promises of greater economic rewards or of improved social services for the rural masses are occasionally honored.

47 The term "quasi-capitalistic" has much less force, of course, when
433 applied to urban enterprise. But there, too, economic activity has a
565 curiously static quality when compared to enterprise in more developed countries. The Port-au-Prince capitalist is famous for "playing
178 it safe." Import-export trade, tourist hotels, guided tours, gas stations, and urban slum real estate are more rewarding spheres of investment than shops or commercial farms. A small but economically important Syrian-Lebanese-Italian group limits its local investment accordingly, as do most of those "native" Haitians who carry on their businesses in the towns and cities. Elite families consist largely of siblings who interlock their economic activities with government, the military, agricultural processing and exporting, consumer-goods importing, tourist-connected services, and the professions. A slum block, a post in the ministry of tourism, a colonelcy, or a tour agency, can be a lucrative investment; few indeed are the Haitians prepared to take the risks needed to develop highly productive farms, to produce improved strains of poultry, or to introduce industrial skills through a modern machine shop. And the reasons for this lack of verve and daring are easy to find. Governmental instability, excessive
[C48] taxation, lack of access to markets, and the absence of roads, communication, small-scale credit facilities, and the like mean that special

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I

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR COUNTRY

IN the ten thousand square miles of Haiti's mountains and valleys more than two and a half million people—some say more than three million—are crowded together. Some are black, some light-skinned, but less than five thousand are white, and these are almost all recent immigrants to the country. Modern Haiti has its racial roots primarily in Africa, but its social roots lie as much in Europe as in Africa; if it is "American" at all, geography and a few fairly superficial characteristics are the only American qualities it displays.

Carrying our own cultural interpretations with us when we visit our Caribbean neighbor, we are likely to misunderstand what we see in Haiti, for it is very easy to think of all colored people in terms of our own. To do so is to remain completely ignorant of Haiti. Whereas in the United States we use "Negro" and "colored" indiscriminately as synonyms, making a real distinction only between "black" and "mulatto," all four terms are taboo in polite society in Haiti. A new descriptive vocabulary, an entirely new frame of reference, must be acquired by the friendly foreign visitor to this West Indian republic.[1]

Probably the most striking phenomenon in the country is its division into two social groups. So rigidly are the class lines set that

1. No greater error of tact can be made by visitors to Haiti than to use such commonly accepted American terms as Negro, colored, mulatto, blacks, Africans. Whereas in the United States such words are employed to describe people with a greater or less degree of Negro blood, in Haiti they are generally regarded as opprobrious epithets, emphasizing the color of the epidermis as all important, while ignoring the essential matters of culture, standard of living, and social background. Not many Haitians would have the grace to reply, as President Pétion suggested to a subaltern who was incensed at a white man for calling him "un nègre," "Why, then, did you not call him 'un blanc'?" Probably the most offensive of all the terms is *mulâtre*, for it calls attention to miscegenation in the family. The educated people in general regard themselves as darker Frenchmen, not as transplanted Africans. Books about Haiti which refer to the "black republic" seem to them to ignore the important fact that the blacks, though numerically preponderant, do not rule. The visitor must accordingly acquire a new vocabulary of color. It is safer not to make any allusion at all to the matter; but if occasion demands, one speaks of "jaune" and "brun," not white and black.

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caste is the only word to describe the effective separation of aristocrats from the masses. The caste system is a vivid fact, for it regulates a person's profession, speech, religion, marriage, family life, politics, clothes, social mobility—in short, his whole life from cradle to grave.

Haiti won its freedom from the France of Napoleon in 1804, becoming thus the second independent state in the Western Hemisphere. It had been during the eighteenth century France's most prosperous colony, its wealth depending upon slavery and the plantation system. With the whites driven out, social distinctions which actually had their roots in colonial times began immediately to develop among the people, all of whom had some proportion of African blood in their veins. During the course of the next century the criteria for aristocracy slowly assumed recognizable form, so that now even the most casual observer is aware that Haiti cannot by any stretch of the imagination be called a democratic country, with an open class system. The two castes are the élite and the masses. They are as different as day from night, as nobleman from peasant; and they are as separate as oil and water. The élite are generally reckoned to compose at the outside not more than three per cent of the population.

The élite do not work with their hands. This is the cardinal rule of Haitian society. Upon it rests the whole economic structure of the country, and to this the course of national history has led. All the professions, most governmental and military offices, and the large business enterprises are effectively closed to young men of the masses. Indeed, so completely accepted are caste rules, so practically difficult would it be for peasant youths to acquire the money and education necessary for such careers, that at birth a boy's future place in economic life is, within narrow limits, already predetermined. For the élite, law is the most popular of the professions, partly because it is the quickest avenue of approach to high political office; government, in turn, is the only career which can make a man rich within a few years. Next in popularity to law comes medicine. Teaching is not lucrative enough to attract many promising youths, and the priests of the Roman Catholic Church are almost all white Frenchmen.[2]

2. An effort was once made by the Catholic Church to train native Haitian priests, but the peasants would have none of them after they were ordained. They drove them out, saying, "Go away! How do you expect God to listen to you? You are not white; you don't know anything." And the Haitian priests had to be transferred as missionaries to Africa.

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The distinction between castes on the basis of occupation is nowhere more clearly seen than in the feminine sphere. The peasant woman, from childhood onward, is an indefatigable laborer, absolutely indispensable to the economic life of the country. She not only performs the usual domestic functions but works in the fields as well. She carries marketable goods, sometimes for miles, to the town for sale. The aristocratic woman, on the other hand, is rarely active in business. Indeed, until very recent years no career was open to her outside the home, nor would custom have allowed her to follow one; even now, teaching and a few clerical positions in government service are her only business opportunities. She directs the household economy but has servants if she can possibly afford them. Her place is definitely in the home.

The second infallible test of membership in the élite caste is education and an ability to speak French. When Haiti was a slave colony belonging to France, the hundreds of thousands of blacks imported from Africa had no common tongue, coming as they did from wide stretches of the continent; the French spoken by their overseers, a development of the Norman dialect,[3] became their one language, known as Créole. Every Haitian, high and low, knows and uses this language, for nursemaids speak it to the upper-class children in their charge, and all servants speak it. The élite consequently learn it at a tender age, and must use it in all their dealings with the lower orders. Among themselves, however, they speak French. The official language of the country is French. To speak correct French is an immediate announcement that one has had the advantage of schooling and has been in contact with the aristocracy. Theoretically, Haitian education is free and democratic; actually, no peasant child could be spared from labor long enough for schooling, or find money for proper clothes to go to school in.

Inevitably the standard of living is a reflection of caste membership. "The élite wear shoes," explained General Butler laconically to the United States Senate investigating committee, when asked what characterized the classes of Haiti. His elliptical remark is true. Peasants, indeed, could not afford to purchase shoes, but more particularly they could not afford to dress up to the standard set by the shoes. When a man of the masses dons the castoff shoes of some aristocrat, the logical assumption by everyone is that this man is pre-

3. See chap. XVIII.

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565 511 paring to try to move one step up the social ladder. Shoes are a symbol: wearing these, one must also wear a suit instead of a faded shirt and patched trousers; the suit demands personal cleanliness and a better home; all these lead the country man to town life with its additional expenses. So arduous a climb does not allure many of the Haitian common folk.

565 181 Because the standard of living, with its tangibles and intangibles, clearly separates the castes, the élite observe all the rules with rigor. Their etiquette is formal. Culture (in the popular, not the anthropological meaning) is respected with almost religious devotion.

565 511 434 Since the maintenance of a high standard of living is costly, it is obvious that another source of caste distinction lies in the inequalities of wealth and property. Wealth is a relative term, however, and the Haitian peasant is so poor that by contrast a few hundred dollars' income a year will seem like riches. The élite live economically by American standards, yet even parsimonious spending of money may, when governed by a consciousness of social distinctions, make the peak of aristocracy unassailable.

565 369 The élite live in towns. Many of them own country estates, but regard these as secondary to their residences in Port-au-Prince, Pétionville, Cap-Haïtien, Jérémie, and the other few towns. To live a rural life is to be isolated, out of the stream of fashion, news, social activity. What profession can one follow in a rustic valley? One who is class-conscious must see and be seen by others of his class, otherwise he would be forgotten by "those who count." In the towns are the schools; there French is spoken; there, and there only, financial and social opportunities exist. True, plebeians form the majority of the population even in the towns, so that urbanization alone is not a mark of caste; it must be taken in conjunction with the others.

565 581 Formal marriage is another requisite for membership in the élite. As will shortly be apparent, sex relations in Haiti are quite casual, as judged by American standards. The majority of Haitian families are established by parents who have gone through neither a civil nor a religious ceremony. This is not to imply that spouses are unfaithful to each other, or that there is not mutual respect within the family circle; it merely means that most people regard formal marriage as a luxury which they cannot afford, or in any case as a ceremony which custom has made superfluous. Once again, however, the aristocrat holds to the form. If a family can point to legal marriages among

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several generations of ancestors, there can be little question of its high social position.

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Religion affords still another distinction between high and low. Haiti has a folk religion which American tourists call Voodoo (a name which makes them think immediately of superstitious emotionalism or some kind of occult balderdash), but which is more properly called Vodun. It is a true religion in that it answers for the native the questions arising in the world he knows, while giving him confidence to face the crises of life. Vodun is African in origin, Créole in its language, and homely in its creed and practice; none of these makes it any less a religion. The official religion of the country, on the other hand, is Roman Catholicism. Few members of the élite, however their hearts may yearn for the consoling securities of Vodun, dare openly either to acknowledge their "atavism" or to participate in the cult. They must be Catholics or agnostics. It is often remarked that below the surface many a professing Catholic aristocrat cherishes Vodun beliefs; the important fact is that he keeps his folk worship secret. Because the outside world ridicules Vodun as superstition, and because the approved Catholic Church fights it, government restrictions effectively keep its ritual out of the public gaze. All the discriminatory laws, however, have not weakened its hold upon the masses. It is because Vodun is a *folk* religion that the élite cannot permit themselves to adhere to it openly.

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The final and most complicated distinction between the two castes is skin color. Any generalization on this matter is open to numerous exceptions; moreover, the whole question of color in Haiti touches the most sensitive nerves of the upper classes. One must begin by such casual observations as these: the vast majority of the lower orders are definitely dark or even black; the lighter the skin, the more likely a person is to belong to the élite. It is true that there are black aristocrats, and it is equally true that numbers of peasants have light complexions. At almost any function in high society, however, the proportion of dark-skinned persons is decidedly small. Among the youth, the tendency is always to select a spouse whose skin color is light; marriages are often made between aristocrats and white foreigners resident in Haiti, so that the children may lighten the family complexion. While it is therefore inaccurate to assert that no full-blooded Negroes belong to the élite, it is also clear that lighter persons tend to have social advantages.

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Modern usage, having borrowed the word "caste" from India, employs it loosely to mean a rigid class system of which the people are conscious.[4] In India caste was always endogamous and connected with occupation. Kroeber defines it as "an endogamous and hereditary division of an ethnic unit occupying a position of superior or inferior rank or social esteem in comparison with other such subdivisions."[5] Castes, as distinguished from social classes, "have emerged into social consciousness to the point where custom and law attempt their rigid and permanent separation from one another." By each of these criteria Haiti has castes.

The élite are endogamous in that they would not consider marriage into the masses. The one exception to the endogamic practice is marriage with a white foreigner. Whereas in India all members of a caste had the same general occupation, in Haiti several occupations are open to caste members; but the distinction between honorable and demeaning work is understood by all, so that no person has free choice as regards the two larger categories. Haitian law does not name the social divisions, nor does it legislate the masses into a subordinate position[6]—for the simple reason that there is no conceivable need to enact what already exists. The laws of Haiti are administered by élite officials; these men make the definitions and interpretations. The judge always knows the custom, so that (as in most countries) the same offense brings different penalties for upper- and lower-class offenders. Custom holds sway, and custom is more tyrannical than any body of law.

Inside the castes may be found social distinctions familiar in democracies and in every other kind of society. Interest in politics, business, literature, or sport draws people of like minds together and makes cliques. There are well-to-do families who outshine their neighbors, just as there are peasant landholders who dominate their rural communities. A high civil official has more prestige than a doctor with a small practice, just as among the masses a house servant for an élite family outranks a beggar.

For the majority of Haitians, life is too elemental to be concerned with artificial wants. The peasant talks, unfettered by rules of gram-

4. See also W. Lloyd Warner, "American Caste and Class," *American Journal of Sociology*, XLII, No. 2 (Sept. 1936), 234-237; and John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (New Haven, 1937), pp. 62 ff.

5. A. L. Kroeber, "Caste," in *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, III, 254.

6. Such efforts were made, however, in the early days of the republic. See chap. III.

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mar or any schoolmaster's correction; he behaves like his fellows; he learns by trial and error, by imitation, by the praise and ridicule of his elders, what to do and what not to do. What really matters in life is having food to eat, avoiding bad luck in health and crops, having a wife and family, keeping on the right side of the spirits, and being able at night to dance, sing, and tell tales with his friends. He wears no tight-fitting clothes, never bothers about fashions, certainly never puzzles his brain to reconcile his theological and philosophical views with each other. This is by no means a poetic or idyllic existence for him, however. The peasant is so poor that misfortune may be catastrophic; the soil he has to farm is worn out by decades of erosion and crude tillage; disease is so widespread that most people know misery. A man cannot, even if he would, save up for a rainy day; he lacks the necessary implements to plough deep while sluggards sleep. One is safe so long as he does what everyone else does, and if this rule breaks down, at least misery will have company. Keep out of harm's way if possible, but bear it stoically when it comes. Avoid what is strange—particularly all legal documents, courts, politics, city ways, and people who shout orders. The peasant is conservative because radical changes, such as come from revolutions, for example, dislocate his life, leaving him worse off than before. Progress and improvement are to him only vague abstractions, much less real than the struggle for mere existence.

For the élite, on the other hand, life is rather a struggle to maintain and improve the standard of living. It is always easier to predict what a person will not do than what he will. It would be hard to define, therefore, a typical aristocrat. In one basic matter, however, the high-class Haitian is poles removed from the peasant: instead of accepting things as they are ("*Bon Dieu bon*," runs the peasant saying: God is good—and the inflection of the voice implies that the second "bon" may also mean "inscrutable"), the élite person is restlessly dissatisfied with the conditions of life: economic, social, political. His unexpressed ideal is to be accepted as an equal in the cultured circles of Western society, to have the same entrée to courts, clubs, and parties abroad as cultivated white Europeans and Americans.

Since the country has never had an accurate census, it is not possible to say precisely how many persons belong to each caste. By the most generous estimates not one out of twenty-five Haitians is élite—and such a figure stretches the category to a point which no literate

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citizen would admit. The few cities and towns of Haiti do not contain more than 250,000 people in a total population which the atlases generally put around 2,500,000. Since to live in the city is one necessary mark of aristocracy, and since obviously not every town- or city-dweller is an aristocrat, it is probably nearer the mark to infer that not more than two or three per cent of the people are of the élite.

A slightly larger group would fit neither category. This intermediate section would consist chiefly of those who have taken a few steps toward the upper stratum; they may wear shoes and keep a small shop and speak a few words of French, but not yet be accepted in "respectable" society; aristocrats will look down on them while the masses will regard them with curious interest. Yet these are not what Europeans would call a middle class. In their own generation, they are rootless and insecure. Their children will have as many advantages as the parents can afford, so that the next generation may increase the distance between itself and the common folk. Included in this intermediate group are also a few who, having once been up, are now on the way down.

If the terms "masses" and "peasants" are used interchangeably in these pages, it is because the vast majority of the people get their living from the soil. Haiti is, as it has always been, an agricultural country. The end-paper map lists all towns which claim as many as 7,500 people; only one, the capital, Port-au-Prince, has more than 100,000.[1]

At least nine out of ten Haitians, therefore, lead rural lives, and easily fit the designation of peasant. They live in little communities, generally of less than a hundred persons, rather than in scattered houses. A detailed map would be dotted with place names of these

1. The estimates made by Woodring, in his *Geology of the Republic of Haiti*, p. 67, are as follows:

Port-au-Prince	125,000	Saint-Marc	10,000
Cap-Haïtien	20,000	Jacmel	10,000
Les Cayes	15,000	Port-de-Paix	7,500
Gonaïves	12,000	Jérémie	7,500

It should be noted that all eight of these towns, which by Woodring's estimate have a total of 207,000, are seaports. The country is so mountainous that no cities have grown up in the interior. The map also includes a number of towns smaller than 7,500: these are capitals of *arrondissements* or seats of courts. Woodring remarks that if the people who live in towns having a population of more than a thousand were added to the list above, the total "urban" population then would be between 225,000 and 250,000, which is barely ten per cent of the total in the country.

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increasingly arid as its altitude decreases. Next to the Plaine du Nord, the best-watered part of Haiti is the southwestern peninsula, which projects far beyond the shelter of the mountains in the rest of the island.

When one subtracts from the 10,000 square miles all the sterile wastes of cactus, the salt marshes and brackish lakes, and the rock barrens, one realizes the inevitability of a low standard of living for the mass of the people. Other nations buy little from Haiti, local industries never reach even the proportions familiar to small-town Americans, and the total national budget is less than seven million dollars a year. Not even the elite are well-to-do by American small-town standards; it is only by comparison with the masses that they can be said to constitute a favored economic class. They rule the country, however, and what benefits accrue to Haiti rarely get beyond their pockets.

The resident of Haiti can never lose sight of the social distinctions between the two castes, for they permeate every phase of Haitian life. It has been so since the first hours of the republic. Indeed, the origins of the caste system lie in the French colonial days of the eighteenth century.

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175 24 567 equaled the demand for them; in 1791 the census listed half a million of them living, but no writer seems to have even a vague idea of how many millions were imported during the sixty years of the colony's heyday.

175 245 249 433 511 565 Production, particularly of sugar and coffee, steadily increased until the tiny colony ranked among the wealthiest regions of the world. The Spanish Indies were declining, so that Saint-Domingue alone far outranked them all combined between 1766 and 1791. Splendid roads were built, extensive irrigation projects developed, and stately mansions erected. Life moved along with ceremony and display—for the planters; attended by their black lackeys, the white French masters entertained royally or were driven like lords in their coaches to make formal visits to neighbors. Many of these well-to-do colonials spent half their time in Paris, ostentatiously spending their riches. To be "wealthy as a Creole" came to be a common expression in France.[1] Perhaps nowhere in the Americas was existence at once so delightful and so ornamental as it was for the wealthy planters among the 36,000 whites of Saint-Domingue in 1791.

175 439 505 648 For the mother country, too, this small bit of tropical land was profitable during the later days of Bourbon royalty. Neither Martinique nor Guadeloupe could compare with it in value. In 1789 nearly two thirds of the foreign commercial interests of France centred in Saint-Domingue; its combined exports and imports were valued at more than $140,000,000; its sugar, coffee, indigo, and cotton supplied the home market and employed in prosperous years more than 700 ocean-going vessels, with as many as 80,000 seamen.[2]

175 565 669 Where wealth exists, social distinctions generally develop. In Saint-Domingue the evolving class system produced such discord that sparks from the French Revolution eventually set off an explosive in the colony. Casual surveys of Haitian history generally record that in 1791 the slaves revolted, and that out of this insurrection grew the war of independence. This is true; but it was not the resentment of slaves against their masters which caused the final explosion; the slaves were tinder used by others to keep the conflagration burning. Negro slaves, of course, did not figure in the "class" system; they were below the classes of colonial society. The class system, properly

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1. The word "creole" means only "colonial born"; there is no connotation of race mixture in the term.

2. Pamphile de Lacroix, *Mémoires*, II, 277.

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speaking, consisted of the three groups known as *grands blancs*, *petits blancs*, and *gens de couleur*.[3] Although no precise English terms will translate either of the first two categories, the former embraced the important whites—owners of large plantations, wealthy merchants, and high officials of the state; the latter designated all other whites of the colony—shopkeepers, artisans, small planters with only a few slaves, little people busily engaged in social climbing, and shiftless whites lazily slipping downhill. The 28,000 *gens de couleur* included all free persons who had African blood in their veins.

It is highly probable that without this third group there would have been no violent outbreak in 1791, no achievement of final independence in 1804, and no such caste system as exists in Haiti at the present time.

That there were free people of color in the colony was due to a code of laws emanating from Louis XIV, who died in 1715, years before Saint-Domingue had shown any signs of becoming prosperous. In 1685 the Great Monarch had issued a Code Noir to cover all colonial dealings with Negro slaves. Article 59 specified that when a slave secured his liberty, either by cash purchase or by gift of his white master or parent, he was to be regarded as a full French citizen. He might own land, dispose of his wealth as he pleased, bear testimony in legal cases (even against whites), marry as he pleased, vote, bear arms, travel where he wished, embrace any career, own slaves or free them. To Louis and his ministers such provisions probably did not seem particularly magnanimous, for race prejudice was not a characteristic of the French, and it could hardly have been supposed that enough slaves would ever be freed to create much of a problem.

In the course of the next hundred years, however, many persons of color in the colony achieved their freedom, and with it French citizenship. The greatest number had been granted their liberty because they were the children of white masters by Negro mothers—for race mixture is always a concomitant of white ownership of black slaves. Concubinage was so regularly practiced in Saint-Domingue that it was considered quite normal. If many of the first freedmen were mulattoes (half-white, half-Negro), by 1791 their descendants might be quadroons, octoroons, or near-whites, for consciousness of skin

3. The *gens de couleur* were also often called *affranchis*, freedmen, a term which strictly would be inaccurate as applied to a free colored person of the second or third generation.

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color predisposed a freedman to separate himself, by marriage with a person at least as light as himself, as far as possible from his slave ancestors.[4]

Aside from paternity, the chief reasons for freeing a slave were faithful or extraordinary service, and the readiness of a master to free his concubine. By the time of the Revolution many of the free colored people had not known slavery in their families for four generations, while still more had been free for two or three. During the century many had acquired wealth by inheritance from former owners. Their close association with well-to-do white planters had instilled in them the desire to improve their economic fortunes as well as their culture; friendly relationships with their benefactors afforded them the opportunity. Like the grands blancs, the prosperous gens de couleur sent their children to Paris for an education, and went there themselves for pleasure.

As the free colored people flourished, so also did the jealousy of the petits blancs against them. "Society" in Saint-Domingue was beset, as is any social system which has not yet the sanctity of long tradition, with heartburnings, intrigues, resentment, snobbery. Petit blanc aspired to become grand blanc; small planter longed to be received into the smart set of the wealthy plantation owners; creole resented the top-lofty airs of the recent émigré from France. What was more irksome to the petit blanc than his own exclusion from high society was the acceptance into it of many colored people whose parents or grandparents had been African slaves. Since many of the gens de couleur were better educated and more cultured than the lower-class whites, inner consciousness of mental inferiority may have added fuel to the fires of jealousy.

The growing wealth of free colored people was notable in the latter years of the century. One fertile parish in the South (Jérémie) was almost entirely in their hands, while in every other part of the colony they had bought or inherited handsome plantations. They looked upon Saint-Domingue as their fatherland, not hoping (as did many of the whites) to retire to France to spend their fortunes, nor yearning (as did many slaves) to return to Africa. The less ambitious

4. Certain colonial writers diverted themselves by working out all the mathematical combinations of blood mixture, with names for scores of the commoner varieties. Since people with some part of white blood in their veins might mate with others of their own kind, with lighter or with darker persons, with black or with white, it can be imagined how complicated the question of race mixture might become.

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took their place in the business life of the towns, sending their children to parish schools. Colored youths served in the colonial constabulary and in the militia, acquiring a knowledge of arms and warfare later to be useful to them.

Estimates of their wealth vary. Some say that in 1791 they owned a third of all the land in the colony and a fourth of all the slaves; others more conservative put the figure at one fifth of each. Even this is impressive enough to account for much of the growing jealousy of their position. And by 1791 the whites outnumbered them only ten to seven.[5]

White women in general added their support to a movement instigated by the petits blancs for discrimination against all gens de couleur. Many wives felt resentment against the colored people because of the frequency with which their husbands took colored mistresses.[6] Moreover, the wealth of the colony attracted an immigration of Frenchwomen with marriageable but undowered daughters—in the candid French phrase, "*de filles à marier et sans dot*"—who seem to have assumed that young planters would want white French wives, even though impecunious ones. It was a shock to quite a number of them to discover that a colonial youth might prefer a colored girl who brought a dowry with her.[7]

Indiscreet affranchis often gave additional grounds for resentment against their group. Wishing to dissociate themselves altogether from their Negro ancestry and to be assured of social eminence, some accounted for their dark complexions by reference to obscure Indian progenitors. On this ground many secured letters patent from local government officials, of course on payment of a fee, legally estab-

5. The census listed 40,000 whites to 28,000 colored. L. E. Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description . . . de la partie française . . . de Saint-Domingue* (Philadelphia, 1797), I, 285, gave the following figures for 1790:

	Square Leagues	Population	Whites	Affranchis	Slaves
North	480	195,000	16,000	9,000	170,000
West	820	194,000	14,000	12,500	168,000
South	186	130,000	10,000	6,500	114,000
Totals	1,486	519,000	40,000	28,000	452,000

6. One governor reported to Paris that he considered sexual jealousy the greatest cause of unrest in the colony.

7. See Sir Harry H. Johnston, *The Negro in the New World* (New York, 1910), p. 141.

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linking their freedom from the taint of any black admixture. Having entered white society by such means, and further diluted their Negro blood by judicious marriages, these social climbers frequently became the most pitiless masters of slaves in the colony, the most rigid sticklers for a color line, ruthless enemies of recent freedmen and of those who acknowledged the dark strain in their blood; and having now "passed over" as whites, they snubbed the petits blancs.

The rising tide of color prejudice became apparent in the passage of discriminatory laws. The first of any importance was enacted by the representative Council of the colony, sitting at the capital, Cap Français, in 1758. It prohibited all colored people, except police and militiamen, from carrying swords, sabres, or other side arms—thus denying them one of the outward marks of gentlemen. Four years later the prohibition was extended to the bearing of all firearms, except in service, while in 1767 the sale of munitions to colored persons was forbidden unless ordered by a white officer. Obviously the instigators of prejudice had by this time won a number of ruling grands blancs to the notion that the presence of numerous people of color might constitute a menace to the physical safety of the whites.

Louis XV, the reigning monarch, took no steps to enforce the liberal provisions of the Code Noir of his grandfather; on the contrary, he seems to have favored the passage of discriminatory laws. He made it difficult for colored planters to travel freely in France. The colonial perpetrators of indignities to the gens de couleur, seeing the success of their first efforts, began to propose increasingly severe restrictions, and were gratified by Louis XV's official "Instructions to Administrators" (1771), which stressed the necessity of maintaining a line between the two races which colored people and their descendants might never cross.

For the next two decades the affranchi had to face openly avowed discrimination. One by one his rights in the Code were abrogated. He might not fill any responsible office either in the courts or the militia, for that would elevate him above white persons. Certain careers, such as goldsmithing, were closed to him, because they brought wealth; others, notably medicine and the apothecary's art, were forbidden on the ground that whites might be poisoned;[8] law and religion were barred to him because of their public and honorific

8. It was a common belief in slave colonies that all persons with Negro blood had some "instinctive" knowledge of the science and art of poisoning.

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nature.' Colored women were forbidden in 1768 to marry white men. In 1779 began a series of laws designed to humiliate the colored person in public: his clothes must be of a different material and cut from the white person's; he must be indoors by nine o'clock in the evening; he might not sit in the same section of churches and theaters with whites."

Just at the moment when prejudice and hatred seem to have reached their most menacing proportions, when even moderate white planters began to feel that such passions had been aroused among both white and colored folk that only brutal severity could hold them in check, the Revolution began in France. Both sides in the colony hoped to make use of it. The whites saw in the mother country's confusion an opportunity to win self-government for the colony—with themselves, of course, as the untrammeled rulers. The gens de couleur, taking to heart the noble Declaration of the Rights of Man, hoped to regain their full rights as French citizens, guaranteed to them in Louis XIV's Code, but now in abeyance.

During the fateful years 1788 to 1793 colonial affairs were intertwined with developments in France. Men and messages went back and forth between Cap Français and Paris, following the startling announcement that after a lapse of 150 years the States-General would be convoked in May, 1789. At a meeting of the colonial assembly in September, 1788, called to nominate delegates, the group of grands blancs who controlled colonial affairs decided on two daring steps, which later proved to be blunders: first, they named thirty-seven deputies to represent Saint-Domingue; second, they drew up a *Cahier des Doléances*—a list of grievances whose sole palliation, it was implied, would be the granting of permission to the white planters to govern the colony without interference from France. These two decisions, be it said, were not unanimously approved in the assembly at Cap Français; cautious minds warned against pretentious demands which might do nothing more than attract concentrated attention to the state of affairs in Saint-Domingue: it might be wiser, they argued, to let sleeping dogs lie, and ignore the convocation of the States-General. The cautious were outvoted.

9. A colored lawyer might win a case against a white man; a colored priest might have to hear the confession of a white woman.

10. When certain mulattoes arrived at church in Cap Français wearing clothes of the same texture as the whites', constables tore the garments from the backs of male and female alike, leaving them "with no other veil than their shame."

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Noirs, having returned to Saint-Domingue to campaign for the political rights of his group, led with his friend Chavanne a demonstration at Cap Français. The white authorities seized and executed them with notable brutality.

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This occurred in March, 1791. In May came the news that the National Assembly in France had finally yielded to pressure, and had decreed that men of mixed blood born of free parents should be admitted to representation in colonial assemblies. The chagrin and anger of the whites at this decree was so violent that the governor-general of Saint-Domingue immediately suspended its operation. The issue was now clearly drawn: free colored men knew that they would never secure their rights except by force. But before they could bring to maturity their plan of action, suddenly the calculations of both parties were completely upset. The Negro slaves revolted.

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If ever slaves had reason to rebel, the Negroes of Saint-Domingue did. The same harshness which the whites showed to free colored people marked the treatment of black slaves; and as racial antagonism deepened, white masters seemed to become utterly heartless in their treatment of the inarticulate blacks. Allowing for the exceptions which accompany most generalizations, it is clear from the record that the planters were, in the main, callous, ruthless, some of them even fiendish, in their treatment of slaves. Flogging a man to death was not uncommon; certain slaves were buried alive; pregnant women were forced to work so hard that miscarriage resulted. Some of the punishments meted out were merely brutal; others were torture; and some were sadistic, the masters relishing the pain they were causing. A certain slave in the North was nailed by his hands to a wall, and then, after standing all day in the burning sun, was made to eat his own amputated ears. A woman planter had the tongues of all her slaves cut out; another woman caused the starvation of her maid by having a gag fixed around the child's head.[13] Visitors to the colony in the 1780's often commented on the general want of self-control on the part of the planters—their violent gusts of anger and passionate outbreaks over trifles; and the victims of these outbursts

13. An officer of the court of the Negro king Christophe later wrote in two volumes a gruesome account of the treatment of slaves by French masters in the latter days of the colony. Although certainly exaggerated, it probably contains a measure of truth. See Baron de Vastey, *Réflexions politiques sur les noirs et les blancs* (Sans Souci, 1817); and *Essai sur les causes de la révolution et des guerres civiles d'Haïti* (Sans Souci, 1819).

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two. Here was a decline of about 150,000 from 1790.[2] It is a commentary on the man's forcefulness that in spite of all difficulties Dessalines established an effective economic organization. Its basis was serfdom.

Every citizen, he announced, must consider himself in one of two categories, laborer or soldier. There were to be no shirkers in the new Haiti; if a man was not in the army, he must do manual labor. Artisans who followed a craft counted as laborers. Women, since they could not join the army, must work shoulder to shoulder with their men. It was understood that direction of Haiti's new order would be carried on by state officials who were neither laborers nor soldiers, but these officials were to be so few that they would not constitute a separate third category.

This step of Dessalines' was a radical one. It proclaimed the mastery of state over individual; and even more significantly it divided the people according to economic task, rather than birth, wealth, color, or social status. At first the more ambitious citizens bore patiently with the arbitrary decree, thinking they might be able to achieve comfortable status under a lenient definition of "soldier" or else by sinecure tasks as officials. Their disillusionment was swift. Even swifter was the chagrin of the lowly folk who had been slaves, for they found themselves now in actual bondage to one of their own color.

All people except soldiers, ran the decree, must be "attached as cultivators to a plantation." This might be translated to read "bound to the soil." The vast majority of the people were forced willy-nilly into agriculture. It was "formally prohibited for a cultivator to desert the plantation to which he was assigned"; conversely, it was a crime to give asylum to a runaway cultivator, male or female.[3] If such conditions differed from slavery, they were at least close to what the mediaeval world knew as serfdom. But under this régime of forced labor the recently ravaged fields once more became productive: cotton plantations again covered the plain of the Artibonite, and sugar refineries were slowly rebuilt all over the country.

To forestall complaint from the people once again driven into

2. See, for an analysis of population figures, Placide Justin, *Histoire politique et statistique de l'Ile d'Hayti, Saint-Domingue* (Paris, 1826), pp. 502–503.

3. A certain Mlle. Chapotin, of respectable family, was accused of having harbored a fugitive female cultivator, and, since she was unable to pay immediately the fine imposed upon her by the police at Port-au-Prince, she was condemned to serve a jail term.

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were abolished; with such concessions the people must be satisfied. Dessalines tacitly confessed his inability to follow any course but the French colonial system, with modifications introduced by Toussaint.

Many of the blacks, having tasted a moment's freedom, were not inclined to give it up. Before the new order of Dessalines was firmly established, therefore, they ran away with their families into the hills, where they escaped official notice. As squatters they lived out their lives unmolested. By the time they were officially rediscovered, all Haiti had become a land of peasants.

At the other end of the ladder from the laborers were the officials, who might be great men or small clerks, members of the entourage of the governor-general or merely overseers of a plantation. In order to keep the vast agricultural economy functioning smoothly it was necessary to have hundreds of agents, directors, clerks, and overseers, each of whom must report to a superior. In this official class there was at least a possibility of realizing an ambition for oneself; there was a basis of comparison; more important, there was some possibility of attracting favorable attention of persons in high places and so of gaining promotion. Inevitably something of the colonial state of mind must have carried over into the new era, so that an ex-slave would consider himself as having risen in the world to be now performing a task which only white men used to do—to be spared field labor and to direct the work of others. Out of this group of petty agents rose a few men of ambition who were later to belong to the elite.

Higher officers of state were in a much more favorable position to achieve social eminence. Not only did they perform no manual labor; they were twice removed from that life, since they directed the men who directed the workers. They handled funds. They came into contact with Dessalines himself. Many former gens de couleur filled these important posts, for the number of Haitians who could read and write was woefully limited.

The army was the great power in the country, for the new state was a military one. Since fear of a return of the French required the maintenance of a large standing army,[4] Dessalines made a virtue of this apparent necessity, using his soldiers to enforce discipline among the cultivators. On whom else could he rely for his local administra-

4. Humboldt estimated that the army of Dessalines numbered 37,300, which would be one tenth of the total population. Other estimates run as low as 15,000. Even this figure would be about a tenth of the male population.

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to ally himself with the ruling family. When Dessalines shortly discovered his daughter's condition, he burst into maledictions against all mulattoes, saying that they had plotted this disgrace to him and to his family. He went so far as to speak of having them all executed.

The Emperor's determination, and all his measures, could not quench the social ambition of his leading subjects. They bore what must be borne, conspiring meanwhile to get rid of him. They still had the advantage over the masses of a superior education, and they knew the path to eminence, once the obstacle of the Emperor was removed.

Nothing was done during the reign of Dessalines to cultivate the minds of the laboring class. Discipline backed by force was the guiding principle in dealing with them. Instead of trying to educate his people to understand their duties and to take an active part in statecraft, Dessalines—his generals and counselors, mulatto and black alike, thoroughly approving—used only compulsion. There was actually little difference between the attitude of this ruling clique toward the mass of laborers and that of their former white owners. Both looked upon them as cattle. A few of his advisers tried to persuade the Emperor to provide moral and religious education for the people so that they would not be seduced into completely evil ways, but the Emperor replied, "You are wrong: the laborers can be controlled only by fear of punishment and even death; I shall lead them only by these means; my 'morale' shall be the bayonet."

In short, between 1804 and 1806 no prominent figure in Haitian life seems even to have dreamed of "liberal" institutions. Those who had education, knowledge, and culture preserved them carefully for themselves. The wisdom, even the possibility, of enlightening the masses was doubted. Most Haitians remained in complete ignorance of what went on in the outside world.

Dessalines was killed by ambush near Port-au-Prince on October 17, 1806. The mulattoes were generally supposed to have planned the assassination, for it was well known that they had no cause to be fond of him. His callousness had raised up enemies in all walks of life. The cultivators were glad he was gone, because of his harshness. They were virtually slaves again in all but name; it was reported that upon his personal estates he had made unsatisfac[illegible]workers run the gauntlet between lines of soldiers armed with thor[illegible]y switches, and

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Taxes were heavy

175 651 652 and work strenuous; but there were a sound currency, commercial and agricultural prosperity, and a full treasury.

Like many a great man he was an overweening egotist. His 175 643 159 energy and ambition, for Haiti as well as for himself, neither understood nor tolerated a lesser determination than his own. At times he seemed more intent upon the letter than upon the spirit of his laws. Probably his chief defect, a common failing of strong men, was a disregard for humble individual worth. To write of him invites the most colorful vocabulary. He is Black Majesty and the Emperor Jones. By almost any standards of leadership he would be accounted a great man. He lacked only those few final, subtle qualities which make for sheer genius. In 1820, stricken by paralysis and faced with defections in his army, he died as he had lived, dramatically, ending his life with a specially saved bullet (folklore says a silver one), in his palace of the ironic name, Sans Souci.

175 643 [641] In no significant respect did Christophe change the feudal structure of economic organization begun by Toussaint and carried on by Dessalines. It was in administration, especially as it affected social status, that the thirteen years of Christophe were important for the future of Haiti. Where the Emperor had been an unpredictable tyrant whose heavy hand inspired only terror, Christophe was a sternly just father whose well-disciplined children respected, admired, and even loved him.

175 427 655 546 643 The land policy of the two régimes was similar. Government estates were farmed out on five-year leases to the highest bidders among the well-to-do; large plantations belonging to the state were tilled by cultivators who might, without taking the term too harshly, be called serfs; loyal supporters and wealthy individuals were entrusted with responsibility. Like Dessalines, Christophe added wealth to power and rendered all his subjects dependent upon himself rather than on their own resources and influence—but all this with a difference.

175 643 642 565 Where the Emperor had denied the natural vanity of his aides by refusing them nobility, Christophe accepted their ambition as perfectly normal and made use of it for his own purposes. Four years after he had established his state, he changed it from a republic to a kingdom; all his important men he made dukes, barons, counts, knights. He warned them that he would expect them to live up to the dignities conferred upon them. Pomp and regalia are costly;

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therefore plantations must be made to yield the uttermost farthing if the nobleman was to pay for the necessities of strict court etiquette. It was by no means a childish whim which prompted Christophe to call himself a king; rather an intelligent utilization of the human material the leader had to work with. Vanity was to serve an economic and a political purpose.

Christophe perceived that the defect of Dessalines' reign had been lack of security, both of person and property. Agriculture is a long-term investment and so must be hedged about by orderly rules. To this end the monarch stated his laws clearly, charged a fixed tax—one fourth of the annual crop—which would enrich the kingdom while allowing the tenant-proprietor a reasonable profit, and then guaranteed that no arbitrary demands would be made. Certainly there was no pampering of the wealthy, but there was ample prosperity resulting from regularity and security.

The ordinary citizen was, as he had been, bound to the soil as an agricultural laborer. This quasi-serfdom, however, was comparative freedom. It simply meant that the home and work of a man must be at the plantation on which he had been born. Saturday afternoons and Sundays were free, so that the laborers might make the most of their opportunities to visit the nearest market village, to buy and sell small goods, gossip, and enjoy the sociability of being part of a crowd. Being bound to the soil meant simply that they could not move, when the impulse seized them, to another plantation or another part of the country. Those whose mothers or relatives were natives of a plantation must return to that estate, being forbidden to live in towns. No person, military or other, who did not derive his living from a plantation, could marry an agricultural worker—a prohibition designed to prevent workers from leaving estates because of family ties, and particularly to prevent women, as mothers of future cultivators, from deserting agriculture.

Mediaeval serfdom itself went no further in binding people to the soil. Indeed, it did not go so far in regulating the daily life of serfs. Under Christophe the cultivators lived according to a routine as strict as that of a school. Reveille was rung as early as three o'clock to arouse women to prepare breakfasts for their menfolk; by four or four-thirty the bell was sounded for the commencement of work, which began after prayers had been led by the overseer. At nine o'clock there was a pause for luncheon, and then a resumption of

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their new status was definitely higher. Mild serfdom might be thought of as the first intermediate step toward freedom. Democracy was still far off, there being no real middle class upon which to build it. Only the artisans of the towns and the ex-soldiers or the cultivators who had managed to lease small estates could be considered middle class. Christophe forced every dweller in villages or towns to have a manual skill. The only alternative was field work on a plantation.

The "aristocrats" of the kingdom were prevailingly black rather than colored. It was not to be expected that a vain man would soon forget the trick by which the mulattoes had frustrated him in his expectation of becoming the ruler of all Haiti. To say that the intermittent civil war between Christophe's kingdom of the North and Pétion's republic of the South was a struggle between blacks and colored people would not do great violence to the essential truth. Christophe's suspicion of gens de couleur was so well known that few were surprised at the high death rate of mulatto generals in the North. The murder of General Clervaux was definitely laid at Christophe's door.

The fact remains that among the nobility were men of all degrees of color. The King liked to say that he neither accepted nor yet took exception to the color of a man's epidermis—that in this matter he was *vert* (green), which is to say, neutral and indifferent. When he was angry his wrath fell indiscriminately upon the offender of whatever complexion. Similarly, when he found a light-skinned man who faithfully supervised a leased estate, thus proving his loyalty, the man was rewarded and promoted. Nevertheless, an underlying prejudice remained in his breast, bursting out occasionally at crises, and having ultimately a serious effect upon the loyalty of many of his people. When some of his subjects, enticed by the easy-going régime of the South, ran away to Pétion's republic, Christophe was angry enough to renew the war against Pétion (1811). The South won the encounter, thereby adding fuel to Christophe's rage. Three hundred prisoners he had captured he ordered tortured, and the angry King abused and insulted his own officers and executed several soldiers for having lost the battle. These actions caused more defections, renewed punishments, and a more abiding rancor. As one writer put it, the King "now regarded the mulattoes with a hatred so deep and fiendlike, that nothing would satisfy the direness of his

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vengeance but the utter extermination of that race."[12] He even ordered the execution of a mulatto woman in Gonaïves because she had prayed for the success of Pétion.

During the latter years of his reign his personal popularity waned somewhat, owing to his relentless insistence upon efficiency and to his increasing tendency to lose his temper. Defections to the South occurred almost daily. The cultivators, comparing their never-ceasing toil on Northern plantations with the reported liberty and leisure of life in the South, continually drifted away. So alluring was the paradise of ease (and poverty) of the neighboring realm that Christophe found it necessary to keep a cordon of soldiers along the borders of his kingdom to prevent desertions. His administration now embarked on actual persecution of colored people. Inflammatory pamphlets were spread abroad, designed to make the Negroes think that the mulattoes were planning to enslave them once again. Under this campaign of propaganda many light-skinned Northerners had to go into hiding.

Despite all discrimination, the important line was drawn between cultivators who formed nine tenths of the population, and aristocrats who, with the army, made up the remainder. The nobility, the directors of landed estates, and the generals directed the activities of other people, so that the colonial prejudice against manual labor was strengthened. Here lay the basis of a persistent Haitian attitude of mind: to work with one's hands is to show oneself a member of the masses; to direct others is the distinction of the upper class. Education, neglected under Dessalines altogether, was fostered by Christophe. He established a few schools, inviting as schoolmasters certain Englishmen familiar with the then popular methods of the Lancasterian system; but since the cultivators were busy on the plantations, only the children of aristocrats benefited by the limited educational system and the social distance between classes was increased.

A French commentator says that Christophe showed unusual insight in devising for his kingdom "the only organization of which an African society was capable," namely, a combination of military despotism with certain benevolent inclinations, and territorial feudalism based upon a nobility created by the King. Actually, it suited not so much the African background of the people, which lay

12. Dr. Jonathan Brown, *The History and Present Condition of St. Domingo* (Philadelphia, 1837), II, 197.

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Northern Haiti flourished magnificently under Christophe's sternly benevolent rule. The King had that daring spirit of initiative which was so generally lacking in later Haitian history; he had, in addition, the power necessary to force through a new adjustment if the old way showed defects.[17] He excited artificial wants among his leaders by making nobles of them, and then compelled them to satisfy these wants without ever slipping back to a lower standard of living. Thirteen years of enforced labor and of order kept by a rigorously effective police force gave northern Haiti the kind of prosperity she had known in colonial days. Christophe encouraged commerce and protected foreign traders. He called in all debased coinage, substituting for it sound gold and silver currency. The revenue he raised was larger than it had been since 1791, amounting to about $3,500,000 annually. Probably the most eloquent testimony to his success is the fact that at his death, when the kingdom of the North was once more united with the republic of the South, more than six million dollars found their way into the republican treasury.

The Black King's economic system worked. It was based on a social division of the people, with the masses doing manual labor, and the aristocrats definitely set apart and recognized as upper class. By 1820 Haiti was well on its way toward the caste system.

3. *Pétion* (*1807–1818*)

Almost all Latin-American countries in the nineteenth century exhibited one common feature: an aristocratic landowning class lording it over peons. Haiti did not follow this pattern. She had aristocrats and peasants, but the aristocrats did not own most of the land, and the peasants were not peons. If later rulers had kept the organization of economic life begun by Toussaint and developed by his fellow blacks, Dessalines and Christophe, it is almost certain that Haitian social evolution would have resembled that of the rest of Latin America, for it would not have been a great change from

17. Durocher Vaval, "Le Roi d'Haïti Henri Christophe," in *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti*, II, No. 3 (June 1931), p. 14, says that Haiti's periodic civil troubles and social misfortunes, both ending in a diminution of the state's autonomy, have been due to economic maladjustments. "Our weaknesses in political life derive from our immobility in material production." Immobility is an index of stagnation. Few rulers of Haiti have been at once powerful enough to overcome the immobility and wise enough to know what measures had to be taken.

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175 642 178 433 Haitian writers sometimes praise Pétion for his democratic leanings, by implication criticizing Toussaint, Dessalines, and Christophe for their feudalistic notions. If the blacks were undemocratic, at least they had experience back of the system they selected for administering the land: their methods worked. Pétion's plan, on the contrary, admirable though it seemed to later "liberals," was unexpectedly disappointing. The national income declined; estates were steadily broken up and sub-leased to small farmers; sugar disappeared from the state's balance sheet, while coffee did not supply an equivalent income; discipline of the workers gave way to individualism. Although the whole legislative code favored the landlords, la grande culture crumbled. One is driven to conclude that Pétion simply tried one device after another—always the easiest he could find—to keep state economy functioning.

175 178 565 When Pétion came to power, the common folk of southern Haiti were serfs with a memory of slavery; when he died, they were peasants. At the beginning of his régime the mulattoes and other social aspirants felt they were struggling for very existence against the relentless policies of black rulers; as it closed they were beyond any doubt aristocrats, but by the same token progressively less well-to-do. No one any longer attacked their social pretensions; but the worldly wealth on which these pretensions were based was disappearing along with the country's prosperity, so that new criteria had to be developed.

175 671 As we have said, the keynote of Pétion's rule was persuasion. Where Dessalines ordered, Pétion suggested; where Christophe decreed, Pétion recommended. There is not a single act one could cite during his entire presidency which had the effect of tightening up the organization of the republic. When laws were not properly observed, instead of penalties being made more severe or sure of application, the laws themselves were calmly allowed to lapse. In fact, the period from 1807 to 1818 was one of transition, of experiment, of discovering a congenial way of life. Since it was clear that the mass of citizens were peacefully disposed and unambitious, the President was inclined to let custom rule in each little community. Laws were not repealed, but they were enforced only when general public opinion was clearly in their favor. At many points the upper class would have liked more disciplinary control over the masses and said so to Pétion; yet they realized that in a less than ideal world one

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unplanned, undesired
Haitian peasantry, to sum up, began as the result of two policies intended to achieve ends quite different; first, presidential gifts of land, the chief purpose of which had been to pay the soldiers of the republic; and second, the crop-sharing system adopted by landlords after the failure of Boyer's Code.

6. *The Drawing of Caste Lines (1820–1843)*

Almost every major presidential aim of Boyer came to grief. His tranquil quarter-century rule, the unified island, the financial surplus with which his presidency began, the peace with France after 1825—all these advantages combined with his good intentions did not save his projects from shipwreck. Near the beginning of his régime he announced that, like his revered predecessor Pétion, he felt the safety of Haiti to lie in the abolition of all color distinctions and prejudices. Just as his great Code Rural proved a complete failure, however, so did his efforts to do away with the color line. On the contrary, it was during Boyer's time that class distinctions became fixed, in large part although not wholly, on the basis of color.

Stating that the policy of his government was to put an end, as far as possible, to jealousies of caste, he consistently for a few years promoted a black every time a promotion had been given to a mulatto or other light-skinned person. This procedure soon met an insuperable obstacle. Government posts in general required literacy, and only a very small number of blacks were educated, so that the supply of Negroes was not sufficient to furnish him with candidates. Since one of the few roads to lucrative success lay in official positions, ambitious young colored men sought eagerly for government office, and Boyer soon had no alternative but to advance men of his own complexion. In the army, on the other hand, literacy was not necessary for promotion. Ambitious Negro youths, therefore, frequently chose this career which, while not very profitable in monetary rewards, at least gave a man a certain social status and economic security.

Because of the state of education in the republic, consequently, an ugly situation developed, with the civil arm of government almost wholly in control of the colored element and the military force dominated by blacks. Fortunately for the country no crisis developed during the 1820's and 1830's which made an open breach between [563] army and state.

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trary; they were grudgingly respected as superior beings, arbiters of the fate of the outside world, potential destroyers of the privileges of the Haitian élite should they return to the country in force. Although white men might not legally marry Haitian women, it was not every woman who could resist the opportunity of having children lighter than herself. One indication of the ambiguous attitude toward the whites was seen in religion. In 1842 out of sixty or seventy Roman Catholic priests in the island, only one was a Haitian. Many people in the country were well educated, and certainly more than equals in point of scholarship and *savoir-faire* of the rude priests imported generally from Corsica. But a feeling was current among the peasants that "colored baptism will not stick." There is no indication that the European priests, since they were well paid for their services, attacked this particular heresy. As for the élite, they derived a certain satisfaction in being served by white priests. Aside from the churchmen, however, the only white man in any place of prominence in the country was the mayor of Saint-Marc, whose father had befriended Boyer in former times.

Few visitors had kind words to say of social conditions in the Haiti of Boyer. As a Frenchman put it:

> Democracy was the rule; but what a democracy! A hodge-podge of the most heterogeneous ideas, an alliance of the most contrary principles, of American federalism with military control; the sovereignty of the people replaced by the sovereignty of a ruling clique; and finally, all the intellectual vainglory of a people young, inexperienced, and for a long time denied the legitimate manifestation of their own wishes. Added to all these inconsistencies is the antagonism of races.[61]

This antagonism was, indeed, paramount. The habitual hauteur and assumed pretensions of the lighter Haitians were a perpetual thorn in the flesh of the ambitious blacks, and thus the breach was everywhere widened and made permanent. The blacks retaliated against these distinctions by refusing to obey orders from mulattoes in office, or by petty outrages against private citizens among the colored group.

The vital lack of the country, assuming that stability is desirable, was a middle class of any sort. On the base of hundreds of thousands of peasants, illiterate, unambitious, indifferent to progress, was built

61. Lepelletier de Saint-Remy, "La République d'Haïti; ses dernières révolutions; sa situation actuelle," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, XV, No. 4 (Nov., 1845), pp. 681–682.

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an ineffective government, momentarily in the hands of colored élite. Attempting to dominate politics was a numerically small group of colored people and a still smaller group of Negroes. Although prevailingly black, the army might be, and in the later nineteenth century was continually, used by whichever group offered more. A third power, a middle class, might have balanced these antagonistic factions. Lacking such a moderating influence, Haiti was the victim of recurrent revolutionary movements.

At the time of Boyer, actual democracy would have been no safeguard, for it would have meant the supremacy of ignorance. His rule was the beginning of unfortunate days for Haiti. After the auspicious opening years, the President became an impotent onlooker as his country declined. It is instructive to compare the Haiti of Dessalines and Christophe with the Haiti of 1843, only one generation later.[62]

The Haiti of 1806 had been a beehive of activity. Soldiers, foremen, and policemen then stood over the workers with lianes to force them to labor for the benefit of their state. Production was carefully planned, an ordered hierarchy making every person in the country responsible to another higher than himself until the ruler was reached at the pinnacle. The cardinal fault of any laborer was to shirk at his task. The year 1843, on the contrary, found Haiti in a condition of quiescence which, to those who remembered the old days, resembled torpor. The central government had ceased to drive its citizens, and its half-hearted attempts at persuasion were futile. Overseers, drivers of gangs of workers, soldiers whose duty it was to enforce labor, had disappeared from the scene. Every man was his own master.

The standard of living in 1806 as in 1843 was low; but in the earlier year there had been a promise of great things to come once Haiti had rebuilt what war had destroyed. The succeeding years, however, failed to inculcate into the people a desire for any higher standard of life. Country dwellers were benighted; ignorance deepened the habit

62. Haiti has never had an accurate census, so that it is impossible even to estimate the total population of the country either in 1806 or in 1843. The figures of 380,000 and 800,000 given by some authors for the two years are mere guesses. Likewise, one can only deduce the proportion of people in the main economic and social categories; probably seventy-five per cent of the Haitians were serfs in 1806 and the same percentage peasants in 1843; the "aristocracy," including all who did not derive a living by manual labor or army service, could hardly have reached five per cent in either year; the army, house servants, day laborers in the towns, and petty businessmen would make up the other twenty per cent.

175 643 [625] Suddenly, without warning, he reversed what had been mistaken for docile inactivity, and assumed complete personal command of the reins of office. By means of a well-organized body of secret police, he inspired his own counselors with fear not only for their positions but for their lives. Although illiterate, Soulouque never signed a bill presented to him by his ministers until he was sure he knew its essential core. The hopeful "understudies" were forcibly awakened to the realization that they were hoist on their own petard.

175 643 563 669 The colored element was particularly apprehensive at Soulouque's amazing activity, for the President was clearly setting himself against their group, both in the cabinet and out. Determining clandestinely to get rid of their puppet before he became a Frankenstein's monster to destroy his creators, they fomented a new revolution. This, however, proved to be a strategic error of the first magnitude, for the President was already much stronger than they imagined. The insurrection was quashed with massacre and attendant frightfulness. In the aftermath, as Bouzon mordantly remarks, "the republic was calm—with all the tranquillity of a tomb!" By their ineptitude, the colored group had now made themselves completely insecure.

175 565 643 642 [555] In the second year of his régime Soulouque decided to imitate Dessalines by turning the state into an empire. His coronation was extremely gaudy, as well as expensive. Calling himself Emperor Faustin I, he created a peerage drawn chiefly from among his black generals—four princes, fifty-nine dukes, and numerous counts, barons, and knights. This was merely outward pomp to gratify their craving for prestige, for they had no functions to perform, nor even the necessity of Christophe's peers to pay for their regalia. As nobles they were given no responsibilities in directing economic activity nor any increased political power over districts of the empire. The Emperor's own vanity was flattered by having a peerage. He ruled as an autocrat with blatant despotism. For ten years following the coronation Haiti had to accustom itself to costly expeditions against the Dominican Republic, nearly all ending in defeat for Haiti. The outcome of these intermittent wars was neither gain nor loss of territory by either side, but only temporary rule of occupied districts. Haiti likewise had to accustom itself to sudden executions, to the shabby grandeur of court display, and to financial trickery which would not have deceived a schoolboy. While the heads of his opponents and even his loyal counselors fell, Soulouque's infantile

175 643 721 648 728

"empire" tottered to economic ruin.

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"empire" tottered to economic ruin. Graft, default on the debt, increasing deficits, and debased currency were the order of the day, and so continued until 1859, when the accumulation of anger over the useless wars and the humiliating defeats made the Emperor so unpopular that a new and more carefully planned revolution accomplished his downfall. 175 643 652 669

Fifteen years of administration by Negro rulers had broken the political power of the colored élite. Only three light-skinned men became president thereafter until the occupation of Haiti by the American Marines in 1915; in the seventy-two years following Boyer's downfall, mulattoes ruled during only eight. The army under a black general was too powerful, a colored president too hampered by suspicion, to make the political game worth the candle. The colored élite, therefore, adapted themselves to existing conditions as best they could, controlling the business life of Haiti, filling the law offices and, because of their literacy, the secretaryships of state, and indulging in honorific cultural pursuits. 175 643 178 564

In the years after Soulouque the basic realities of Haitian life were changed hardly at all by shifting political administrations. Some of the presidents were mildly progressive, many were indifferent; still more were actually harmful; but the lives of the mass of peasants were not often touched by presidential vagaries. Politics was an affair almost wholly of townspeople, of the army, the élite, and the pseudo-élite. Revolutions, counterrevolutions, movements of reform, international tangles, financial woes, and most of the other complications to which unstable states are heir, absorbed the attention of rulers and upper-class folk who were politically inclined. 175 643 66

Constitutions were made by presidents and changed by their successors; the Senate passed contradictory laws in the same session if the chief executive so recommended; the courts were presided over by the president's men. Haitian law in the latter half of the nineteenth century was what the president's immediate strength and wish made it—or else it was folk custom, undisturbed by the rulers. 175 642 671 692

Never once, in the three quarters of a century after Boyer's time, did Haiti approach the high standard of production known in colonial days or in the early years of independence. The pattern of Haitian social and economic life became fixed in this seventy-five years. Haiti became a country of small-scale tillage by a peasant population, with only enough external trade to provide moderate 175 178 433 565 439

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fortunes, that is, a few thousands of dollars, for a small number of elite, and to make the presidency a position economically rewarding enough to justify revolutionary conspiracies. The growth of a peasantry set in train during the long régime of Boyer continued, unbroken even by the numerous insurrections, until fixed in the mores. Land owned by the countryfolk was divided and redivided among their heirs, so that even holdings of moderate size became smaller.

Not one of the twenty-two rulers following Boyer made the slightest effort to return the country to the forced labor system of Dessalines and Christophe. They seemed to recognize the inevitability of a peasant way of life, or at least the impossibility of luring the people back to directed labor after a long experience of freedom. On the contrary, several presidents still further parceled the land.

President Guerrier, for example, the very year after Boyer was deposed, put on sale at moderate prices those state lands in the North not reserved for public use.[5] If the revolutionaries of 1843 had hoped to bring back Christophe's system of forced labor, their hopes were doomed to disappointment because of the state's need of immediate income. Christophe's state land areas were now broken up in the one part of the country where a few large plantations still existed.

President Geffrard in 1862 gave his blessing to small ownership, the basis of peasantry. Whereas Pétion's laws had prohibited sales of land in parcels less than fifteen acres, Geffrard's law regularized the leasing and sale of national property in lots of fifteen acres *at most*. Geffrard was the first president openly to admit that many government lands had been lost to citizens by squatting. In an endeavor to give legality to land held by squatters' rights, his law demanded that squatters register their claims, announcing that within a short time there would be no further dismemberment of the national patrimony except by grants and sales.[6] Few registrations were made, however, for the Haitian peasant had already acquired a suspicion of legal documents he could not read or understand, and he could see no reason for legalizing a status in which, with the squatter's tenacity and inertia, he already felt himself secure.

Haiti was in constant financial straits. Money had to be borrowed

5. By a law of September 23, 1844.
6. Law of August 14, 1862. The articles cited here are 2 and 4.

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to attempt to retrace the path of property evolution, which has steadily taken its own course since the time of Pétion."

With the peasants prevailingly satisfied in their daily round of life, the separation of upper and lower castes in Haitian society has gradually become an accepted fact. At least ninety per cent of the total population now belong to the peasant group, whose members are as much reconciled to their status as in the United States the poorest colored folk to theirs. Vaguely they may often wish they had the privileges and luxuries of those above them; often, likewise, they feel resentment at the way in which they are treated; but in so far as it is permissible to generalize about two million people, it is fair to say that the Haitian peasant rarely complains of his lot.

Of the remaining ten per cent of the population a small fraction look upon themselves as élite. Some families of this group can be traced back to colonial times when their ancestors were already affranchis; others began to take on aristocracy under Dessalines, Christophe, Pétion, and Boyer. Those whose forebears have become élite only since 1843 are less firmly entrenched in the topmost class. However, since no president since Boyer has ever succeeded in weakening caste lines, the élite one or two per cent may be said to constitute a stable social group.

It is significant that although the blacks had the government in their hands for three quarters of a century they were unable to effect any slight change either in caste membership or in caste lines.

The part of the population which is neither élite nor peasant is not "middle class," as that term is understood in the Western World. It is rather a shifting percentage of Haitians whose one prevailing characteristic is their residence in towns. Some are wage earners, some small tradesmen; some are ex-élite on the way down the

11. The intimate observer of the Haitian peasant never fails to comment upon his love of the land. Whereas the colonial planter attached a value to his estate because it produced wealth, the peasant loves his little plot because it is his home. Through all the sixteen successive constitutions of Haiti, the one unchangeable article has been the prohibition of sale to foreigners of real estate in the country. Haitian land is for Haitian people—or was so until after the American Occupation. Likewise, the peasant is suspicious of any law which seems likely to reintroduce the system of large properties, for these might condemn him to leave his land and work at wages for the benefit of a master who, whether kindly or pitiless, would still deprive him of his present liberty. Therefore the Haitian countryman defends with all his force this soil to which his liberty attaches him, and which he cultivates after his own manner. "The Haitian loves his land almost as a man loves his woman."

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565 569 [55] social ladder, while others are ex-peasants on the way up. Acceptance by the élite entails requirements severe enough to discourage many aspirants; at the same time, the heavens can be stormed by those willing to endure the heat and strain of battle. Lacking descent from former affranchis, the only means by which the ambitious may achieve entrance into the élite caste is by money, education, sustained social show and leisure, "proper" marriage, and separation from lower caste friends; and one generation rarely suffices to win acceptance by the élite.

565 The townspeople rarely attempt to break down the caste barrier. Servants, day laborers, delivery clerks, menials in general, they consider themselves one step removed from the peasants, and they know their place in the social hierarchy. By the scrupulous observances of the élite, by the casual acceptance of their status by the peasants, even by the very effort of the ambitious to improve their lot, the caste system is constantly reaffirmed and fulfilled.

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However, as regards caste itself we can now see that after a hundred years practically nothing has changed, even through the Occupation. In the essential structure of the Haitian social system there is still a twofold division. In the mind of élite persons the peasant exists only as a very necessary but essentially stupid part of the country's economic life. The casual visitor who, after two weeks in Port-au-Prince and its environs, has met a few distinguished Haitians, has already sensed the barriers of caste which exist between élite and the lower orders. If the sojourner remains longer and is accepted into the drawing rooms of the élite, he will hear exciting and brilliant discussions of such questions as whether Haitian civilization has in it anything of the African,[6] whether it might not be wise for Haiti to throw over both French and Créole and adopt a new language, and whether the people of the North are not superior to those of the South;[7] however, no self-satisfied member of the élite, in an expan-

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6. See, for example, the article by Lorimer Denis and Dr. François Duvalier, "La Civilisation haïtienne: notre mentalité est-elle africaine ou gallo-latine?" in *Revue de la Société d'Histoire et de Géographie d'Haïti*, VII, No. 23 (May, 1936), pp. 1–31. Anthony Froude, in his *English in the West Indies* (New York, 1888), tells of an American consul asking a Haitian why the island was not cultivated more intensely. "The dusky soldier laid his hand upon his breast and waved his hand. 'Ah!' he said, 'that might do for English or Germans or Franks; we of the Latin race have higher things to occupy us!'"

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7. This last sentiment was noted by Sir Spenser St. John (*Hayti, or the Black Republic* [London, 1889], p. 14), who calls it a popular idea at the time he wrote and for years before, the élite of the North explaining it by the tradition of industry instilled during Christophe's reign. But Moreau de Saint-Méry had already pointed out that in colonial times there was greater fertility, more abundant rain, more intelligence in management of plantations, more slaves, more distinction and polish among the masters, in the North than in the South. Auguste Magloire (in *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social*, p. 263) thinks the North infinitely superior to the South; it did not participate in the violence of political change in the early days, yet when it did intervene it took the lead. He stated however that the North seemed to be losing its social superiority, and certainly its economic superiority, because of its cultural subordination to France: this made French ideas prevail, and one of the chief French ideas is that political power is supremely important; the North consequently came to seek political superiority when it should have preserved cultural and social preëminence. Pauléus Sannon, on the other hand (*Essai historique sur la Révolution de 1843* [Aux Cayes, 1905], pp. 5–9), regards the South as considerably more advanced intellectually. It has never, he says, been able to submit to the absolutist yoke of government, not because of the French influence, for the South was least developed under the colonial régime, but because of its geographical situation, with its long broken coast line, its ports, cities, tribunals, customs-houses, schools, and the like. Those who have outside connections are always more open minded and progressive, he says, than inhabitants of the interior. There is no important town in the South which is not on the sea. Nowhere were the affranchis more numerous or richer than in the South, and these men led the revolution. (See Beauboeuf Ardouin, *Études sur l'histoire d'Haïti* [Port-au-Prince, 1853–60], I, 97.) All these influences made for a democratic spirit, but also for one of agitation.

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sive mood, will speak of the peasant and his contributions to Haiti; he thinks only in terms of his own caste.[8] Upper-class Haitians dread the sight of tourists taking pictures of native scenes, fearing that the travelers will return to their own country and label these pictures, "Typical Haitian Scenes," when, as anyone should know, typical Haiti is upper-class Haiti.[9]

The American Occupation failed of many of its ends because it did not recognize the social situation and its implications; or, realizing them, did not consider them worthy of attention. Roads, telephones, mail service, and improved agricultural methods seemed patently desirable to progressive Americans; to install them for the Haitians seemed generously wise. Yet many well-meant efforts came to grief, for the mass of people, lacking a tradition of orderly free government, did not always understand what the Americans were about, while the élite saw in the activities of the Marines a threat to their own dominance as rulers of the country.[10]

The antiquated, but prevalent, notion of the superior mentality of the white race also flourishes in certain quarters among the élite. Many of them say that the Negro can never originate a civilization, and that with the best of education he remains an inferior man, utterly unfitted for government, utterly incapable of making prog-

8. Witness Maritie Ouilé's paragraph (*Les Antilles, filles de France* [Paris, 1935], p. 254): "My amiable host (a member of the élite) was triumphant at my surprise and enchantment. 'You did not expect to find a civilized country. What have the spiteful wits told you? That the Haitians worshipped serpents and made human sacrifices? True, the peasants on the mountain-sides are still very primitive and ignorant, but in the cities you will find many families like ours, cultivated in letters and music, careful and proud of their French culture, and absolutely set against American de-civilization.'"

9. "Should you like a European to take pictures of the slums of your American cities and of the most degraded of your share-croppers, and then circulate these photographs as typical American scenes?" asked one sensitive Haitian.

10. See the *Report of the Forbes Commission to Haiti*, 1930, pp. 18–19. "Illiteracy keeps the peasant masses politically inarticulate, except in case of mobs or bandit gangs, which formerly infested the countryside and often furnished the forces of revolution. These bandit gangs have been broken up and have disappeared under American rule, but the social forces that created them still remain—poverty, ignorance, and the lack of a tradition or desire for orderly free government. It has been the aim of the American Occupation to try to broaden the base of the articulate proletariat and thus make for a sounder democracy and ultimately provide for a more representative government in Haiti. Hence its work in education, in sanitation, in agencies of communication such as roads, telephones, telegraph lines, and regular mail routes. These things naturally are deemed of secondary importance by the Elite, who see in the rise of a middle class a threat to the continuation of their own leadership."

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ress. Others point out the difference between the lower-class Negro of the large commercial towns and the black peasants who live in the plains and mountains. The former, in contact with the roughest of white sailors, are a disgrace to any people, while the countryfolk, seeing only a select few of the whites, appear "to have an innate idea of the white man's superiority," and so treat him with respect. The peasants, according to these speakers, have all the virtues and vices of "wild races": they may acquire a kind of French varnish, but they are "essentially an African people removed from their parent country."[11]

There are among the élite broad-minded, tolerant, and cultured persons. The average member of the caste, however, like the average American, is full of prejudices of all kinds. Travel produces a superficial polish; their patriotism consists of antagonism toward the outside world and an effort to secure position for themselves; they are sure that Haiti's laws are sounder, her culture superior, her schools more advanced, her civilization in general higher, than those of most other nations (France generally excepted).

There are evidences also of certain psychological twists. It used to be said that mulatto Haitians "hate their fathers and despise their mothers," meaning that in colonial times and for a short time after the élite did not like to remember that they derived from a master-slave union. They realize nowadays that they would be accepted as social equals in few countries, and this makes them protest by self-assertion. Certainly a majority of the élite would be completely unwilling to admit that things are anywhere better done than in Haiti.

One generation after the wars which led to independence, the greater number of Haitians had practically forgotten that there was an outside world. Haiti was all they knew. With no standard of comparison for their lot in life the peasants ate, slept, raised their families, fell ill, and died without bothering their heads about such academic abstractions as equality. This uncomplaining acceptance of life, routine, and fate seems to be the essence of peasant existence. The Haitian peasant has been bound to the soil by mental inertia and by tradition more effectively than ever by law. When he has revolted it has been through conviction that someone was trying to change the old familiar ways, or because of physical maltreatment. Peasants have been bribed and paid to revolt, but as mercenaries they have entered only half-heartedly into warfare.

11. The phrases quoted here are fragments of statements made by Haitian élite to the author.

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In most countries in which Westerners are familiar, social distinctions take the form of classes, which are to a greater or less degree mutable. In Haiti, as we have repeatedly indicated, the distinctions are so rigid that *caste* is the only properly descriptive term. There is hardly a Haitian who would not be able to state immediately whether he or any person he knew was, or was not, élite. So it has been with steady persistence ever since Dessalines and Christophe gave way to Pétion and Boyer. Élite youth marries élite girl, and the folkways of the group are passed on from parent to children, thus perpetuating the distinctions. In the pages which follow, all the marks of separation of castes will be examined: religion, economic occupation, marriage, language, manners, and the rest.

Certain aspects of the classic example of the caste system, seen in India, are lacking in Haiti. Religion, for instance, does not require caste endogamy, nor does civil law implicitly acknowledge caste lines by reference to the rights of people of a certain occupation. Custom does more than religion and law could, however, to enforce conformity to the understood rules. Probably the most open efforts to enact caste lines into law were the pronouncements of Dessalines and Christophe that all but a few people should be bound to the soil; and Boyer's Code Rural—a feeble echo of days gone by. The two black rulers were able to enforce the distinctions they made; but when they died their feudal arrangements lapsed, while the separation of classes continued. With the recurrence of revolutions after 1843 it behooved the élite, when occasionally they were in authority, not to lay themselves open to fresh attack upon grounds of aristocratic presumption, for they never knew when they might need the support of the masses. Any black revolutionary leader would have been able to turn an enacted caste law to his own ends, even if a Senate consisting predominantly of light-colored men had had the power to enact such a law. Time and inertia won the battle for the élite. By not joining issue with the masses at any definite point, the aristocrats gained their end of caste distinction, for they were willing to endure the self-discipline necessary to the maintenance of social standards, as the masses were not.

Just as in colonial days the ambition of the well-to-do freedman was to go to France for his education and his holidays, so in free Haiti the lure of France has continued to be strong for the aristocrat. There is not a trace of animosity against the country which enslaved the Negroes, and which in 1802–3 tried by trickery to take away the

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565 484 177 186 rights of people of Negro blood. As a distinguished Haitian remarked, "It is from France that we draw our culture, our language, our literature, our attitudes of mind: why should we not love her?" The more time the élite spend in France, the less kinship they feel with the masses. There is not necessarily any conscious snobbery in this increasing discrepancy; it simply results from a life spent in entirely different environments. The Boston Brahmin, for example, may be kindhearted and yet feel little kinship with a Mississippi share-cropper.

564 Inside the castes one may find social distinctions familiar in democracies. There are well-to-do élite who set the standards of manners and entertainment, and there are peasant landholders who through force of personality dominate their rural neighborhoods. The intellectual man of the upper classes stands somewhat apart from the social whirl of "high society." An important government official has more prestige among the leisured classes than a small businessman, just as a powerful religious adept is more honored among the peasants than a happy-go-lucky ragamuffin. It is obvious, however, that within the élite caste social discrimination occurs more frequently and is more accurately observed than among the country people.

[184] [77] [208] Such phrases as "Haitian religion" or "Haitian public opinion" are accurate only in so far as the person who uses them defines the adjective "Haitian." One might describe truly a phenomenon characteristic of ninety-five out of a hundred Haitians and yet, in the opinion of those who dominate the economic, political, and social life, do injustice to Haiti.

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validity to forms and ideas which we know, in our hearts, might sustain us.[1]

The Haitian peasant is not interested in making formal distinctions. If he is critical, it is only of results, rarely of the means used to obtain those results. If he cannot gain his ends in one way he is not too proud to try another, and still a third. Nineteen out of twenty Haitians, then, being Roman Catholics in religion, are likewise worshipers of Vodun. There is so much mystery in the world, so much misfortune, beauty, sorrow, and joy that it would be unthinkable to deny God or the gods: mankind has worship enough for them all, and need enough of them all. There is to the peasant no conflict between Vodun and Catholicism; the two are complementary, even if sometimes the Catholic priests make coöperation impossible.

Let us recall for a moment the earlier history of the country. In the days of slavery one may imagine the Church would have found it difficult, even if its priests and planters had been willing, to train all the blacks as thorough Catholics. Some concepts took root, some rites immediately appealed. Below the surface, however, the African ideas of the preponderant Dahomeans were spreading through the plantations. In the crucial early days of independence, when the customs and social institutions of the Haitians (as Haitians, not as expatriate slaves) were in process of formation, the country's rulers were not deeply religious; moreover the State was in open schism from the Church. For fifty-five years no approved churchman was at work with the people. The seventy men whom some historians mention as priests were on the whole venal and self-seeking, even vicious. Their least concern was to wean the people away from their superstitions, for precisely in these folk beliefs lay the greatest source of gain. By the time the breach between State and Church was healed it was too late to make single-minded Catholics of the Haitian peasants. They would accept what the new and active priests taught them, but not to the exclusion of what they had believed for a century.

With the élite the Church has had more success; assiduous teach-

1. This either-or dichotomy is not limited to religion: we divide ourselves similarly in politics, family life, residence, and so on. If I am a Lutheran, a Republican, a married man with a home in New York, I cannot at the same time be an Episcopalian, a Democrat, and a voter in Chicago with a second spouse and family there. What is impossible and ridiculous for Americans, however, is in some ways the normal course of life for the Haitian.

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565 771 ing since 1860 has had its effect upon the children of the upper classes. Two hundred churchmen working with a population of more than two million cannot distribute their benefits equally. Teachers must devote themselves to those whose minds are educable, who have access to schools, and who can afford time for daily classes. An element of social snobbishness entered as well. Catholicism was socially accepted in the Western World whose approval the élite coveted, where Vodun if known at all was regarded as a mere superstition. To prove his separation from the peasant black, the élite person was therefore Catholic or nothing.

[797] It would have required many times two hundred teaching brothers and sisters, all with the zeal of fanatics and the energy of dynamos, to convert the masses away from Vodun. In acquainting the peasants with Church forms and certain beliefs the priests have been entirely successful; in making exclusive Catholics of them they have had no success at all.

771 177 Every vital social institution is continually in a process of change. Vodun, a very living faith, has steadily borrowed more and more from Catholicism, the only other religion with which the people come in close contact. When one can go from a Saturday night Vodun sacrifice and dance to a Sunday morning Catholic Mass with no feeling of incongruity, it is obvious that the minds of the worshipers are actively predisposed to assimilation of creed and ritual.

796 We have suggested in a previous chapter some traces of the Catholic Mass in Vodun ceremony. The Vodun service regularly begins with a long ritual which the observer who knows both the Créole language and the Catholic liturgy recognizes as being almost entirely Roman. While the Vodun houngan sits quietly by, a special officiant known as the *prêt' savanne* (bush priest) reads or pretends to read from the Catholic prayer book. For the Pater Noster, the creed, the Ave Maria, the Salve Regina, and the prayers, the worshipers kneel or stand as they would in church. Candles burn, water is sprinkled, the sign of the cross is made, the chants are sung. When the benediction completes this part of the service, the houngan takes over to conduct the purely African rites; yet his first words are, "*Grâce mise'-corde,*" and many Catholic interpolations appear even in this second part of the service.

[778] [192] The Vodun ritual is conducted before an altar, in Haitian Créole called a "trône," which is a perfect marriage between Vodun and

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175 567 581 [794] when slaves were to be sold. Even when whole families were brought over together from Africa, it was considered discreet in Saint-Domingue to separate the various members at the slave market, so that there would be little chance of combinations and intrigues. Theoretically the Church was in favor of regular marriages between slave men and women, but even if the Africans had understood or desired the "sacrament," the opposition of the white planters would have been enough to curb missionary insistence on this point; the Jesuits had already been expelled from the colony for their too great zeal in plantation reforms.

175 567 588 [843] As a usual thing, then, slaves simply cohabited. It was not against the rules of a plantation for a slave and the woman with whom he consorted to live together in a slave hut with the children born to them; but neither was it against the rules for the overseer to put other slaves into the same hut, or to sell promising slave children as if they were cattle.[1] Little was done to prevent sex relations between slaves, although masters had varying attitudes toward the results of these relations: some planters welcomed births as a stockbreeder welcomes additions to his herd; others resented the pregnancy of slave women as an obstacle to necessary field work. In the former case, a planter's capital was increased; in the latter, abortions resulted when the overseer drove pregnant women to hard work under the tropical sun.

175 567 588 The freedom of the planters with the persons of their attractive female slaves likewise weakened any tendency toward monogamous family life as conceived by bourgeois European society. The relationship between master and slave woman was momentary. Not often was a woman so beguiling that she could be called a concubine; still less often was she a mistress. The latter estate was the height of any female slave's worldly ambition, for not only might she then be freed, but she could live a life of leisure. In rare cases she might hope to persuade her white paramour into marriage. Almost certainly her mulatto children would be free.

175 565 591 In so far as there was any predisposition toward strict observance of European marriage practices, it was most clearly exhibited by the group of affranchis. As freedmen they were intent upon establishing

[567 581] 1. Under exceptional circumstances slaves found themselves under a benevolent, religious master who allowed them to be married by a priest and thereafter to live together as a family.

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themselves and their families economically and socially. Property was important, so they took pains to insure the legitimacy of their heirs; color was crucial, and so they regulated the marriages of their children to be sure there was no reversion to the black strain. They guarded their fortunes solicitously, provided their daughters with dowries large enough sometimes even to lure a white husband, educated their sons in Paris—behaved, in short, as if they had been pillars of society in provincial France. Like the white planters, the male affranchis often had relations with slave women, but even more rarely than whites were they seduced into marriage with women of the lower orders.

When the slave insurrection and its aftermath freed the half-million blacks in Saint-Domingue it was not to be expected that European middle-class morals and practices should suddenly prevail. Modern usage emerges from the womb of tradition. Neither in Africa nor in the colony had tradition taught the blacks respect for monogamy or for marriage entered into by religious ceremony. If the ex-slaves had reverted to their Dahomean, Congolese, or other African background, they might have introduced the bride price; but to pay a bride price is to assume the existence of wealth, an assumption contrary to fact among the ex-slaves in Saint-Domingue of the 1790's, and Haiti of the 1800's. In neither Dahomey nor the Congo was there much ceremony at the union of a couple; what there was consisted mostly of singing and dancing. If, on the other hand, the people went only by what they had observed in slave days, there was no tradition of binding union or strict codes, as we understand them. A man knew when to stay away from another man's woman; children remained near their mother—these two statements almost cover the situation as of 1796 among the newly freed slaves.

Toussaint, apparently a conventional person in what concerned social behavior, wished his people to be "moral." He instituted a time of "holy masses, mystic communions, biblical psalms, and divine ecstasies"[2] for his private edification, and recommended the same for his people. He could not possibly have instilled into them a desire for Christian marriage, however; even if he could, priests would not have been available for the wholesale marrying of scores of thousands of men and women. Local records of weddings at this period are very scanty.

2. Saint-Rémy, *Pétion et Haïti*, III, 93.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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must pass to an illegitimate child if recognition is accorded. It is likewise strong in its harmony with actual conditions: in the absence of legal marriage among the people, it would have been manifestly unfair to favor a few fortunate children. Dessalines argued that the revolution had legitimized all Haitians; that it was unjust to prevent a child's inheriting from the person who had given him life; and that since all Haitians had come out of slavery and degradation into freedom, no new inequalities should be instituted.[4]

If this law encouraged family life, it weakened marriage both of the civil and religious kind: where was the sense in the expensive luxury of a wedding when children were just as legitimate without it? By conforming to folk practice the Emperor confirmed it. Only the aristocrats disliked his law, for it seemed to make light of one of the distinctions they cherished—the formal wedding. It irked them to have the State place a casual child upon an equal plane with one born after proper marriage.

At still another point the law accorded with living conditions at the time. During the years of fighting many men had been killed, and always the large standing army kept thousands of others away from settled farm life. Home, then, was for a child the abode of his mother—a fact recognized by the law's insistence upon maternal relationship rather than paternity. Such a word as "matriarchate" has no place here; but from the days of Dessalines to modern times, the lowly Haitian thinks of his home primarily as where his mother lives.

As if the advantages of formal wedding were not already sufficiently weakened by this law, other enactments of the empire struck at other phases of marriage. Divorce was permitted for adultery, for incompatibility of temperament or character, and by mutual consent. Such provisions not only broke away completely from Catholic practice, but made getting out of wedlock a casual matter of taking an oath. The complaint of incompatibility need be made by only one spouse; "mutual consent" as a ground for divorce was probably not allowed in 1805 in any other country of the Western World.

Dessalines did not appear to care one whit for the good opinion of white foreigners. It sufficed for him if Haiti endured, whatever Europeans thought of her. Christophe, on the other hand, was extremely sensitive to foreign disapproval. Many of his official acts can

4. According to the testimony of Madiou, *op. cit.*, III, 216.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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X

HOME LIFE OF THE ÉLITE

565 581 ONE brief characterization of the élite might be that they are those who carefully observe the proprieties. The proprieties are those of France, and among them is "common sense" in marriage.

175 565 831 581 People of privilege in colonial times, which were the fountainhead of élite tradition, lived at ease and did not concern themselves with manual labor. Nor were they burdened by puritanical codes of sexual morality, but on the contrary enjoyed sex relations with whatever attractive women came their way. But they would have thought it sheer folly to allow momentary delight to interfere with the very practical matter of choosing a wife. Marriage meant increasing one's fortune, strengthening one's social position and connections, establishing one's children. Romance was as irrelevant to all this as to choosing a business partner. This attitude of the French planters, current even in France of the present day, was the standard for freedmen.

175 565 588 581 Even when wealth was most plentiful in colonial society it had not been always easy to find the proper wife for an affranchi youth. For a man to remain single, however, did not mean that he remained celibate. He might, on the contrary, contract a fairly permanent informal union of love, while discreetly refraining from a marriage which would jeopardize his own or his family's status. Such informal unions were not generally regarded as immoral. Good taste, it was felt, was a sufficient guide in all matters of sex outside of marriage.

175 565 581 The unsettled condition of the colony between the slave insurrection of 1791 and the achievement of independence in 1803–4 did not change the affranchi concept of suitable marriage. During the brief two-year rule of Dessalines, the ideal of propriety in marriage remained the same in spite of the Emperor's efforts to undermine the importance of legal weddings and the legitimacy of children. Pétion, upon his accession in 1806, showed himself a true member of the mulatto aristocratic group—indifferent to the morals of the masses so long as custom settled their problems for them, and content with the marriage traditions of the élite. He said publicly what was neces-

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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sary for a president to say as to proper respect for moral principles, then left morality to take care of itself.

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During Pétion's time and that of Boyer there came into common usage the convenient term "*plaçage*" to describe the extramarital unions of respectable people. "Concubinage" was a crude word, with definite overtones of disapprobation; plaçage was more indirect, and carried no connotation of disrepute. Briefly, plaçage was the union of a man and a woman for pleasure, companionship, and a measure of home life, without the assumption by either person of any legal obligations. A man might make as many of these tentative unions as his disposition, his finances, and his tact dictated. Often enough they were with women of his own social class, for Haiti had an excess of women over men; but generally they were contracted with pleasing women of the lower social orders. Young men not yet financially able to marry, younger brothers whose inheritance was too small to support a family, husbands who had married for practical purposes rather than for love, and eagerly lustful men—these were the usual participators in plaçage.

Although for a woman a church wedding might be the height of ambition, and proper parents tried to see that their daughters achieved it, there came to be a feeling that no disgrace attached to being *placée*. Certainly at the beginning a wife outranked a placée, just as in colonial New England a wife outranked an old maid; but to be placée was a far better lot in Haiti than to be a spinster in Massachusetts Bay colony. No one would have thought of calling a placée by so inaccurate a term as "mistress"; still less would anyone have assailed her moral standing. A man who had a mistress might keep his arrangements with her secret; but plaçage unions were, or came to be, quite open. The one great flaw in the arrangement was that near middle age a man might cease to care about his union with the woman. Foresight and adaptability were the only safeguards against this fate.

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Nowhere else in the Western World has there been so little actual marriage in proportion to the population as in Haiti. Whether technically it is correct to speak of peasant unions as examples of plaçage is a matter of opinion; certainly the peasants rarely marry. Thousands of Haitian couples in all walks of life could be found at any period since 1804 living quietly together from youth to age, bringing up a family of children with as much order as do others who have had a

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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581 wedding to consecrate their state. These unions might be called
565 (after Anglo-Saxon usage) common-law marriages. Many such
588 couples have, late in life, gone through the wedding ceremony at the insistence of children aspiring to social prestige.

175 Haitian writers have frequently felt it necessary to explain and
114 justify to the outside world the practice of plaçage. Thus Saint-Rémy
581 in 1857 wrote: "*Plaçage*, or primitive marriage, is still one of the
588 Haitian customs. It requires no civil or religious formality. I must
565 confess that some of these unions are more respectable than those sanctified by civil and religious law."[1] Dantès Bellegarde in 1934 implied (erroneously) that the practice had always been one limited primarily to peasants. He said:

> Haitians have been accused of immorality because they practice free unions. This reproach is unjust. Concubinage is without doubt the rule among the people [that is, the peasants and workmen]; but it constitutes a sort of *connubium injustum* (unlegal marriage) which, in many cases, has nothing immoral about it, certain "plaçages" having more solidity and seriousness than a large number of regular marriages. In order to understand the existence of this custom and its persistence in the lower classes of Haitian society, one must go back to the colonial epoch: the whites kept numerous concubines, white women being few in Saint-Domingue. (The [162] white population of Saint-Domingue was composed in 1789 of 30,826 souls, of whom 21,166 were men and 9,660 women—not counting soldiers and sailors.) On the other hand, the Negroes did not marry each other, because they did not care at all to have wives whom the master might "abuse," to use the word of Père du Tertre; moreover, masters did not require their slaves to be married: they mated them with a view to obtaining fine "products."
>
> Concubinage tends to disappear among us, or at least to become more discreet. In the cultivated class people generally marry, and the girls in most modest condition—having passed through the primary schools—resign themselves willingly today to the diversion of their unused affections to cats and other domestic animals if no one offers to lead such girls to the altar.[2]

175 Nineteenth-century visitors were generally shocked by plaçage,
581 just as middle-class people are usually shocked by sex ways which
588 seem franker than their own. That the Haitian practice was a practical one, based upon a desire to preserve property intact within the

1. *Pétion et Haïti*, V, 66 note.
2. *Un Haïtien parle* (Port-au-Prince, 1934), pp. 30–31.

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175 581 588 643 Englishman, Sir Spenser St. John, said that he had met placées of the President at dinner, and was asked to trace resemblances between children and their reported father. "No one seeks to conceal it, and the conversation of married ladies continually turns on this subject. One excuse for it is that many of the ladies whom you meet in society were only married after the birth of their first children. However, according to French law, that ceremony renders them all legitimate. Some of those admitted into society are not married at all, but their daughters being married, prevents notice being taken of the false position of the mother."[5]

565 581 In recent years the élite, although many continue to contract plaçage unions, keep these arrangements quieter than formerly and tend to make them with women lower in the social scale than themselves. Formal and regular marriage is expected and approved among the upper classes of today. Indeed, one modern informant in answer to the question, "What is the primary test of membership among the élite?" replied without hesitation, "Five generations of marriage in the family."[6]

583 565 Formal marriage is not entered into lightly among the upper classes. It is a serious business watched over by state, family, and church. The interest of the state seems to be to guard against bigamy. The possibility of bigamy is the more likely since one or the other contracting party may have formerly lived in plaçage. The interest of the family is in the wisdom of the alliance. Before a wedding can be performed both parties must have obtained the formal consent of their parents, besides having their banns published at their respective places of permanent residence. There seems to be some doubt whether the courts would uphold a father in his refusal to consent to the marriage of a son over twenty-one years old; but cases are known in which such a refusal has stopped the wedding. Of course, the daughters must always obtain parental consent to marry.

585 The civil wedding, adopted in Haiti at the beginning of her independence, is usually followed by a religious ceremony. The Church, like the State, takes precautions against clandestine marriages and bigamy. Notice of a projected union must be read from the pulpit

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5. *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, I, 177–178.

6. John Lobb, in "Caste and Class in Haiti" (*American Journal of Sociology*, XLVI, No. 1 [July, 1940], 29), states that "one informant defined family status as a position resulting from the recognition that in a family the parents had, for generations, been legally married in the church."

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Another observation must be set

588 162 alongside this professional testimony: many men, both aristocrats and common folk, have more than one placée, yet there seem to be enough women for Haitian men.

595 565 Although peasants in Haiti are rarely married by formal ceremony, the family is a dominant characteristic of peasant life. This sums up the domestic situation among the masses.

When it is recalled that the Negro, from the time he was taken from Africa on slave ships, had almost no experience of the European tradition of conventional marriage, one has a partial explanation of the absence of peasant weddings. For the rest the people are realists, arguing that a man should have as many women as he needs to carry on the economy of his land holdings; the law forbids polygamy, but exerts no control over plural unions which are entered without formal ceremony. It has therefore come to be regularly accepted in the mores that practical need should determine the number of women to one man. If a peasant increases his land holdings, if he buys or inherits a second farm on the other side of the mountain, it is only common sense for him to take a second woman, raise a family by her, and thus have an overseer and a labor supply resident on each of his properties. Everyone in the community knows what women belong to what man, and custom strongly taboos any tampering with another man's spouses.

162 581 163 Only the Catholic Church has statistics to reveal the infrequency of marriages among the masses. The story was the same a century ago as now. In the important parish of Gonaïves in 1825 the proportion of marriages to births was as 1 to 62; in 1826 they were as 1 to 54.[3] Both figures include marriages and births among the élite, and Gonaïves is a town: in the countryside the proportion of marriages would be much lower. The parish priest of Carrefours, which numbers about a thousand households, stated that in 1936 there had been only ten marriages among his six or eight thousand parishioners. [848] Another parish priest estimated that only one half of one per cent of the baptisms performed were of children born to parents legally married. Even in the parish of Pétionville, home of many élite, a priest estimates that less than one child in five is born to married 595 parents. A century ago a commandant at Léogane, speaking of a high army officer, said, "He is my brother-in-law: I live with his sister." Near Port-au-Prince lived a rural police captain with six plaçage

3. Mackenzie, *op. cit.*, II, 119–120.

Spouses,

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581 suspicion of legal complications is well founded: the priests therefore
794 try to concentrate their attack upon the remaining motives. Thus one priest issued a notice at a certain mountain chapel that he would perform no weddings there for persons who wore shoes; an increase in weddings followed. By such devices, and by constant sermons on the significance of the sacrament, he has persuaded many of his parishioners to be married, yet the vast majority of them continue in plaçage.[4]

581 Informally entered unions among the peasants, then, rest upon a sound, practical, economic basis. If the priests are ever to be successful in their campaign for more weddings, Haitian peasant economy must undergo a change; even then the plurality of women (if indeed it exists), now more or less absorbed by plaçage, will work against the reform.

562 It is confusing to speak of "status" in connection with the domestic
●565 life of hard-working people, for status implies law, and law hardly touches peasant life. Custom governs all—inevitably, since the majority of peasant women have not been legally married, and since no peasant would willingly take a case to law. Yet women have a definite status as compared with men.

In almost every detail a peasant woman's life differs from that of élite women. The rule of life in country districts is unremitting labor
462 for the female from childhood up. She cooks and makes clothes,
565 labors in the fields after the men have cleared them, does the family
443 washing in the nearest stream, carries water, does whatever housework is required. Practically every Haitian peasant woman has her experience of going to market to sell the vegetables, trinkets, or
[484] other wares her family may produce, and to buy necessities. This trip to market may be short, or as long as twenty miles. One of the characteristic sights of Haiti is the seemingly endless procession of women coming down from the hills trudging, or rather swinging majestically along, with a great load on the head, or riding on the haunches of a tiny donkey loaded with bulging panniers. Arrived at

4. As a result of his campaign for more weddings he has had some unusual experiences. Once, in the midst of the wedding ceremony, a bride rushed out of the chapel and shortly gave birth to a child; when she was able to move again, the ceremony was resumed. Again, traveling into the mountains to perform a similar ceremony, he found a crowd assembled under a tree, assisting at another birth of an infant to a bride-to-be. Sometimes he encounters the argument by a peasant that he will not consent to a wedding until his spouse has proved her fecundity by bearing a certain number of children.

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the market, the women sit all day in the broiling sun, and in Port-au-Prince at least, sometimes sleep near by for the night, in order to complete their purchases and sales and to get their fill of companionable gossip. They are often accompanied by the youngest of their children, some of whom have to be carried.

Some observers profess to see evidences of a matriarchate among the peasants, for as a general rule the woman attends to the business dealings of the market place, handles the money, directs her children, and manages the household. If the man has more than one placée spouse, complete control of the farm is the woman's during the absence of her man. It is a superficial judgment, however, to speak of the peasant mother as a matriarch. The man owns the land, chooses his women, calls for help at the moment he pleases for preparation of the ground for planting; and when he knows his end to be near, summons all his families and disposes of his property as he sees fit. His decision is final. But he is no more a patriarch than his woman is a matriarch: they are economic partners in a struggle for existence.

By our standards, the woman is inferior to the man not only in rights but in being one spouse of several. He may contract several unions, while she may have only one. She does more steady, if not more actual, physical labor than the man. When he is at home, she must offer him the best of the food. As usual in simple societies, however, the issue rarely arises as to superiority or inferiority of the sexes. Customary behavior is followed without much question.

There is one great contrast between élite and peasant women, in the matter of childbirth. The élite mother takes as much care of herself during pregnancy and parturition as would an American woman in well-to-do circles. The peasant mother, on the contrary, cannot allow herself the luxury of medical attention, nor can she spare the time to rest quietly. Like many so-called "primitive" women, she apparently finds herself little incommoded either by pregnancy or birth. Babies are born frequently in the market place, the mother having come down from the hills only that day with her goods. It is not unusual to hear of the birth of a child in a roadside ditch or in a grove by the path to and from the market town. The care given mother and infant is primitive: the navel cord is cut with a sharp stone or a piece of broken glass; a short rest is thought sufficient before the mother resumes her task. As might be expected, the death rate from infection is high and women age prematurely.

Parents are generally kind to their children, so far as physical

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ary, 1843, Boyer realized that it was futile to oppose the revolutionaries and departed for exile, going by way of Jamaica to Paris.

Now came the test of the revolutionary leaders.[11] The state was in their hands; their own representative, Rivière Hérard, was the new president. They proceeded to concoct a ridiculously naïve constitution which by granting a popular vote alienated large bodies of their mulatto support; to insult the black army leaders; and to allow the defeat of Haitian forces by Dominican revolutionaries, thus losing two thirds of the island's area. Every act weakened the party favoring representative government. Within a year Rivière was ousted and a black general was ruling Haiti with a rod of iron. The Revolution of 1843 from which so much was expected had by its very success ruined the parliamentarians, for with power in their hands they showed themselves utterly inept.

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A succession of black generals now came to the presidency. When Faustin Soulouque became president in 1847, the fourth Negro within four years, and made himself emperor two years later, Haiti found herself once more back at the strong-man principle. The élite were out of office, relegated to inferiority in all phases of political life.

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In the middle of the nineteenth century the groups upholding the conflicting principles in politics became organized political parties. Those favoring parliamentary rule called themselves Liberals; those believing in the sole rule of a strong dictator were called Nationalists. But by no stretch of the imagination could the Liberal party be considered democratic. The noble principles expressed in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and the American Declaration of Independence were uncongenial to Haiti. One of the prime tenets of the Liberals, indeed, was that men were not created equal; rather that certain men (the élite) were clearly the superiors of others. Liberty

[175] [669]

11. The revolution was almost wholly an affair of the élite caste. The mulatto Boyer was deposed, and the mulatto Rivière Hérard took his place. If anyone thought of the peasants, it was only to use them to manipulate and manoeuvre the "outs" into office. Boyer's secretary-general, deposed along with the President, appealed to his countrymen against their accusation of treason against him, saying "My last wishes will be for the prosperity of Haiti and the regeneration of the African caste, to which I have consecrated myself wholeheartedly for forty years, without ever thinking of my own interests." (Joseph Balthasar Inginac, *Message à ses compatriotes, et principalement à ceux qui ont dirigé les affaires populaires de la république depuis la fin de janvier dernier* [Port-au-Prince, March 18, 1843], p. 6). Yet if these are more than hopeful words, they refer only to the distribution of the land which made peasants of the "African caste," and to Inginac's pamphlets on how to raise coffee and other products—which none of the peasants could read.

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was well enough, but all upper-class landlords wanted the privilege of living in leisure on an income derived from the menial labor of black workers. Fraternity was a principle ridiculous to a group whose never-ceasing struggle was to confirm the separation of castes. The term "Liberal," then, was borrowed not from the revolutionary documents of the late eighteenth century, but from the parliamentary parties of the nineteenth—those who saw more opportunity for themselves and their group if the power of tyrants and kings could be curbed by legislatures. The idea was particularly congenial to the Haitian intelligentsia for the simple reason that the powerful rulers of Haiti, past and present, were Negroes who did not share the aims and ideals of the social upper class.[12]

By holding such "liberal" views, the mulatto élite saw their one opportunity not only for curbing the strong men among the Negroes who again and again tried to rule Haiti as if it were a native African state and themselves the supreme chieftains, but also for indulging their own special penchants. A Senate filled with élite politicians suited the talents of the educated aristocrats. They liked constitutions and codes; the law was their favorite profession; they were adepts at drawing neat distinctions between this and that in an academic issue; polished oratory, skilful argument, fluent speech were knacks peculiar to them by temperament, position, education. Boyer had been the beau-ideal of the academic "liberals," with his talkative Senate, his complete set of Codes and national system of courts; the mid-century party members came to realize what they had lost by driving him out.

Every time the Nationalists came to power the colored élite suffered. Under Dessalines they lost greatly in property and position; Christophe had hated and hounded them; Soulouque put many of their leaders to death. The only monarchs Haiti ever had were blacks, and the two most tyrranical presidents in the first seventy-five years after independence were Nationalists (Pierrot, 1845–46, and Domingue, 1874–76).

The experience of the Liberal presidents with parliamentary institutions was not entirely a happy one, however. Pétion and Boyer had

12. It must be recalled that no parliaments of England, France, or the United States in the early nineteenth century had true democratic representation. Property qualifications for voting, rotten boroughs, and the persistence of privilege assured that only the "classes" should have full representation, and so rule the masses.

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The era from 1883 to 1915 was Haiti's worst, politically. Revo-

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lution succeeded revolution; the country sank deep into graft and scandal; foreign powers made Haiti debase herself before them. Some of the élite, backed by foreign merchants resident in the country, went so far as to urge annexation by the United States rather than endure continued disorder in economics and degradation in social life. They felt matters had come to such a pass that only so radical a change could clean the Augean stables. This was the period of a succession of political pamphlets[14] written by élite thinkers to set forth the necessary steps of reform. Every president was a black autocrat, holding power by his control over the masses. If an occasional one was more than mediocre (Hyppolite, for example), his good qualities were sure to be more than offset by the ignorant boors (such as Nord Alexis) who followed him.

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True, even the most incompetent of the Negro presidents was obliged to employ a few élite, for literacy was necessary in the foreign office if nowhere else. The aristocrats were impotent, however, for Haitian problems had tremendously increased at the very period when they were losing control of government policy. Reforms were imperative, as every member of the élite knew; but no black president saw the need, or seeing it, had the vaguest idea how to proceed toward effecting them. Beyond the shameful disgrace of Haiti's position in the world of independent nations, the thoughtful could glimpse the anarchy which must inevitably result from continued ineffectiveness.

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Reforms were not forthcoming. Rather, anarchy came, bringing international complications in its wake. The American Marines occupied the country. An era was ended.

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It had been a strange journey in political ideas from the time of Pétion and Christophe to that of the Occupation. The early leaders seemed to envision triumphs for Haiti in a world of great powers, and to see themselves as men with a mission. After Boyer the vision dimmed. We have Soulouque, whose tinsel empire was mere stage setting for the act of a neighborhood bully; the tyrant Domingue; the senile Nord Alexis; the utterly incompetent fly-by-nights in the decade before the Occupation. Even Geffrard the reformer, prob-

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14. Among the most lucid of these were: Démesvar Delorme, *La Misère au sein des richesses* (1873); Edmond Paul, *Les Causes de nos malheurs* (1889); Léonidas Laventure, *Haïti: le danger de la patrie* (1893); Alcius Charmant, *Haïti, vivra-t-elle?* (1905); and Auguste Magloire, *L'Erreur révolutionnaire et notre état social* (1909).

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Even Geffrard the reformer,

175 643 661 ably the ablest president in the second half-century, who was pledged to reduce the expenses of government (a promise which, since he was accustomed to a life of penury, should have been easy to fulfill), increased his own salary to $50,000 a year, and allowed himself $20,000 more annually for secret service and a similar sum "for the encouragement of arts and sciences." He bought two estates with government money; the meat bill of his family was charged to the budget of his bodyguard, and the family champagne bill to a hospital. After Geffrard, the presidency was openly regarded as the juiciest financial plum in Haiti which, if one could pluck it, would justify the necessary expenditures for a revolution. It seems from contemporary comment, indeed, that Geffrard's actions aroused not censure but rather envy, as if every ambitious Haitian would have welcomed the opportunity to do likewise. The bitingly critical Englishman, Sir Spenser St. John, railed with some justice, "Every Haitian appears fully persuaded that his countrymen never seek office except for the purpose of improving their private fortunes."[15]

175 643 646 The legislature was never a real check upon the President. It was useful to him at times when he wished to delay action on some embarrassing imbroglio with a foreign power, for by referring a measure to the Senate he could stall it in tedious debate. Almost without exception, however, the legislature consisted of the President's men. Its halls were palaces of idle oratory. One whole session was devoted to a discussion of fitting the hall with cushioned seats; another to the propriety of appointing an interpreter for representatives who understood only Créole and not French. To make a man a Senator was a satisfactory way of paying a political debt. To be a Senator was to have social prominence, a salary of $1,600 (decidedly a competence in nineteenth-century Haiti), an opportunity to speak before an audience—and no real responsibility.

179 One may grant without debate the difficulties facing this small and poor country, a Negro state with great white neighbors who regarded it with something less than deference. Yet Haiti in its early days had real promise. Wherein lay its defects? Haitian thinkers knew the answers, and frequently indicted themselves.

175 871 The want of education was a basic weakness. Those who believe in democracy need no rehearsal of the benefits of popular enlightenment. Because the great Negro heads of state were themselves im-

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15. *Hayti, or the Black Republic*, p. 185.

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perfectly educated, and because other matters seemed infinitely more pressing than the setting up of schools, the early Haitians, united in 1804, fell apart within a single generation. On one hand were the élite and a few other townspeople who knew at least something of the outside world; on the other the masses of toiling countryfolk to whom tiny Haitian valleys were the whole universe. The young men of these two classes coming to power could not understand each other; they could not make concessions to each other; and as they fought for what they held true, each grew suspicious of the other if not permanently hostile. The lack of common understanding might still have been repaired in any one generation, but no single president had the vision to inaugurate universal education. Aside from the expense, certain powerful élite citizens often expressed their doubts as to the educability of the peasants; as property owners they would undoubtedly have objected to the unsettling of the economic order, which was based upon the work of an ignorant mass of blacks.[16]

Without education, the political sphere went unenriched by any flow of new blood from the people. Politics existed in a vacuum. The earthy, candid criticisms of a politically conscious folk never invigorated the discussion of national affairs. Without education, the people had no standards of comparison of Haiti with other nations, and were the easy dupes of whatever insurrectionary agitator could persuade them that their daily woes were caused by the current administration. Without education, high political office became a prerogative of the few, a contest between the Ins and the Outs, a path to personal wealth. Without education, Haiti could never be more than a dictatorship by a man or a clique, her stability endangered with the downfall of each incumbent, for dictatorships rarely provide for continuity in government.

Another great weakness was the notion that national happiness could be achieved by political means primarily. After the germinal ideas of Christophe and Pétion, which had a basis in economic behavior, hardly another important concept came out of a century of presidents. Haitian politicians have been great arrangers: they have given the country eighteen constitutions and innumerable codes, all admirable in their loving solicitude for precise detail. The common feeling of political aspirants has been, "If we are given power, all will

16. This argument is clearly stated in Madiou, *op. cit.*, III, 176 ff.

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175 178 181 prosper." Yet every change of administration saw merely a new embroidery on the old theme of sterility.[17]

175 565 The further weakness of social or class consciousness has already been treated at length. It kept the whole nation divided from top to bottom, setting black against colored, North against South, countryside against town. It meant a perennial civil war, latent at times, but constantly breaking out in new insurrections.

175 669 701 Some day a diligent scholar may try to catalogue the revolutions which Haiti has undergone. Magloire discusses sixty-nine "important" ones between 1806 and 1879;[18] but the latter date was merely the threshold of renewed revolutionary activity. There seems to have been very little pattern in these uprisings, except that almost never were they a spontaneous revolt of the masses, as the Slave Insurrection of 1791 had been. The peasants were constantly being impressed into service with the army of a general who had presidential ambitions. From the middle years of the nineteenth century certain peasants found fighting a more profitable trade than any other, and began to hire themselves out as mercenaries. In the North these professional guerrilla warriors were known as *cacos*, in the South as *piquets*. Their methods were those of terror and rapine. They were a constant menace to the peace, and their suppression was one of the announced purposes of the American Occupation, for every revolutionary chief felt it necessary to hire their services.

176 369 669 Another recognized procedure of revolution was incendiarism. Haitian politics is almost wholly the affair of townsmen, and more narrowly of the men of the six important towns—Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, Jérémie, Les Cayes, Gonaïves, and Saint-Marc. Except for their principal buildings and villas, these towns are constructed of wood or other inflammable material. Leaders of insurrections therefore have habitually set fire to the poorer sections of the towns, and as frequently as not this threat has won over the populace, who preferred overthrowing the government to having their homes burned. Support of the insurrection becomes a form of fire insurance. Such a state of affairs is eloquent testimony to the cynical attitude of the political leaders toward the masses.

660 A revolution directed by a general of real ambition was likely to

17. Auguste Magloire, *Histoire d'Haïti d'après un plan nouveau* (Port-au-Prince, 1909), I, 230, 243, 250–251, develops this theme at length.
18. *Ibid.*, Vol. II.

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can "advice and approval," rather than with the legislature subject to popular control. Even under such restrictions the politically minded found ways of exerting pressure on the Marine authorities.

Out of the darkest days of military subjection by a foreign power came a changed order of politics in the country. The practically unbroken line of dull incompetents who had come into the presidency ended; instead of ignorant army leaders, educated men were once more in office; instead of Northern Negroes, élites of Port-au-Prince; instead of benighted martinets bewildered by world affairs, men who, if not great statesmen, at least had minds capable of understanding Haiti's relation to international economics and politics.

The élite were back in power. In the mind of every friend of Haiti arose the question whether the events between 1879 and 1915 had taught them lessons which would make their return to responsibility productive of great things for the country. Because of the abnormal situation resulting from the Occupation, the world depression, and the briefness of their new ascendancy, one cannot yet speak with assurance. Nevertheless, there are few encouraging signs. Political office is still regarded by most candidates in terms of their own advancement rather than service to Haiti. Very little has been done to extend the base of voting by developing local responsibility and education among the masses. Élite youths still receive a classical education, still disdain manual labor, still cherish the ideal of a graceful life of ease. The president still rules as an autocrat supported by the gendarmerie—substitute for the army of former days. One can see no decrease in social distinctions or in the disdain of the élite for peasant people; on the contrary, there has even been an increase of this feeling because the Occupation (through its Agricultural Service particularly) seemed to open paths of development to the peasants. Social antagonism, not social responsibility, still underlies political life."

To every one of these strictures there is a plausible reply. It is no light matter to unsettle the minds of nine tenths of a population by education, to cause an economic revolution by improving agricultural techniques, to admit to political life a people unaccustomed to

20. Dr. Jean Price-Mars, in *La Vocation de l'élite* (Port-au-Prince, 1919), *passim*, especially pp. 51 ff., urges the élite to accept their responsibilities rather than rest upon the debilitating assurance of their innate superiority.

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finally the license was obtained, it authorized the foreigner to carry on only a wholesale business—not with other foreign traders or with any resident aliens, but with Haitians in the six open ports.[10] The minimum of goods to be sold in any deal was fixed, so that no foreigner could inadvertently enter the retail business. Such licenses cost between $1,600 and $2,000, sums so large that few foreigners were drawn to the island.

Quite obviously the government sought to keep the external trade of Haiti under its control; it is equally obvious that under the licensing system, with its high fees and strict surveillance, only a small number of dealers were attracted, who consequently monopolized what little trade there was. Retail business being prohibited to them, their imports had to be sold by Haitians.

Not even this necessity created a middle class in the country, for the purchasing power of the peasants and other lower-caste Haitians was small; also the total sum of imports and exports was not large enough to support a middle class. The retail trade was chiefly in the hands of town women. These *marchandes*, as they were called, employed a number of hucksters—likewise women—to traverse the countryside surrounding the open ports, attend the markets, and report either every evening, or every week or month, depending upon their findings. The white man let his marchande know how much coffee he required, and this information was passed on to the local speculator who, at a very moderate profit, collected the coffee beans from the peasants in his neighborhood. Imports were distributed in like manner over the countryside. In its small way this system worked well enough, for the good faith of respectable marchandes could be counted upon both by the white trader and by the local dealers. A few European and American traders found it profitable to set up as marchandes the women with whom they cohabited, for this arrangement brought them nearer to the retail trade.

During Boyer's long administration the staple export was coffee, still cultivated on a few remaining plantations but mostly picked from plants growing wild, and sold by the peasants as their one source of money income. Sugar disappeared almost wholly from the

10. Namely, Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, Gonaïves, Jacmel, Les Cayes, and Jérémie; from 1822 to 1844 there were also two open ports in the Spanish part of the island which, during those years, was a part of Haiti.

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Justice in the courts was administered by Haitians whose narrow patriotism biased their decisions.

5. A temperamental tariff policy. Not only were imports subject to a tariff which might be changed at the whim of any president, but exports also were taxed. When an administration was in need of funds it might suddenly, without warning, raise the tax on coffee exports and so disrupt a merchant's business plans. The customs-houses were in charge of Haitians who steadily became more inefficient and grasping as the century progressed, until many foreign merchants felt that the only way of getting business dispatched was by means of bribes. Examinations at customs were long drawn out, often there was open thievery, and erroneous valuations were common.

6. The burden of the indemnity to France. Contracted by Boyer in 1825, this annual payment for sixty years was an incubus to every administration, leaving no surplus in the treasury for public works, education, or any internal development; likewise, it made the threat of foreign interference all the more imminent.

7. A debased currency. Pétion was the first president to devalue money, and his example was frequently followed thereafter. Counterfeiting was general. When a country's monetary system is unstable, its officials accustomed to bribery and graft,[17] and its financial structure almost nonexistent, there is little chance for sound economic development.

8. Dependence upon a single crop. Haitian economy was tied to the staple coffee, grown with indifferent care, prepared for the market in outmoded fashion, and sold in competition with coffee from more scientifically run plantations in other tropical countries.

9. Political instability. The recurrent revolutions in Haiti made foreigners chary of participating in the country's business, since the government which made a contract might be out of office before the ink was dry.

10. Indifference of the élite to economic pursuits. What profits were obtainable went into the pockets of foreign merchants, not those of Haitian businessmen. In 1842 the comparative exports of the

17. Sir Spenser St. John, always a bitter critic of Haiti, remarked (*Hayti, or The Black Republic*, p. 88) sardonically that "Boyer had the rare quality of being honest, and left in the treasury, on his departure, the sum of £200,000, the first and last chief who was ever guilty of so unaccountable a weakness."

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United Kingdom, the United States, and Haiti, in proportion to population, were 185, 165, and 125,[18] yet Haiti had no carrying trade while the other two countries had, and so the profits were drained from the land.[19]

In short, as Haiti became accustomed to managing her own affairs, she became content with—or at least, reconciled to—little things. Inertia and tradition worked in their persistent fashion, with no effective stimulation from outside to combat them. From tradition and seclusion springs prejudice, and this became obvious whenever a change was proposed, particularly one which suggested bringing white people back to the country. To the élite it might mean the end of their social supremacy; to the masses, the end of their independence of daily action. The prejudice against sugar making was rooted in the same kind of suspicion. When a large landowner tried to institute a sugar mill on his estate, he met an adamant refusal of his hired workers to labor in it: "*Moué pas esclave!*" (I'm no slave!) The Negroes even disliked a bell to ring them to work on a plantation, for it suggested the slavery of the old régime.

Just before the Civil War in the United States a humanitarian gentleman developed a project of conducting numerous free American Negroes to Haiti in a planned migration. He discussed in a pamphlet[20] all the possible trades which might flourish in that country, if the migrants were to assume the position of a middle class; but his list is significantly small—sixteen occupations, on the order of tailoring, coopering, and blacksmithing, were all he could think of.[21] He made three comments which he hoped would attract the Negro Americans, as to a virgin field of opportunity: that in the

18. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 111–113, cites these figures, and says: "[Thus] Hayti, poor, and despised as she is, has a commerce, *in native produce*, nearly three-fourths as large, *in proportion to her population*, as our own United Kingdom, which is the great manufacturing part of the world; and seven-eighths as large as that of the United States, where the staple exports are produced by the labour of 3,000,000 slaves!"

19. Mackenzie (*Communications Received at the Foreign Office* [of Great Britain] *Relative to Hayti*, Document V) reports that in 1825 exports were valued at $5,793,758, and imports at $4,660,374; the trading was carried on in 552 *foreign* ships, of which 374 were American, 78 British, and 65 French. No Haitian ship traded abroad.

20. Benjamin S. Hunt, *Remarks on Hayti as a Place of Settlement for Afric-Americans*. See particularly pp. 3–9.

21. His exceptete list is: tailor, shoemaker, baker, cabinetmaker, carpenter, mason, lime-burner, distiller, cooper, wheelwright, saddler, blacksmith, tanner, hatter, small-boat maker, potter.

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3. *Education*

871 To a people like the Americans who accept democracy as desirable, and regard universal education as a necessary basis for democracy, it would seem a simple matter for the Haitians to build schools all over the countryside, pass laws requiring attendance, and so within a decade, or at the outside a generation, reform the whole country. To the American, education is the fount from which all democratic blessings flow. For the Haitian the problem is neither so clearly defined nor so simply solved.

545 871 The élite, who are solidly in control of the government, are aristocrats partly (largely, one might even say) because they are educated. Because of the maxim of Haitian life since the beginning that a literate man should not do manual labor, any program which proposed universal education would cut the ground from under the present social structure by giving the masses equal opportunities with the élite, and at the same time ruin the economic organization by making peasants want to desert field labor for professions and business. An ordinary degree of self-interest is quite sufficient to explain the lack of enthusiasm of the ruling class when the subject of general education is broached.

871 Good reasons are often given by people in lieu of real reasons for their actions. One of the good reasons advanced by Haitian ministries for the failure of the government to promote universal education is its cost. Those American states whose population is prevailingly rural know the validity of this reasoning. With children [369] scattered over the rural regions—and nine out of ten Haitians do not live in towns or large villages—it would require thousands of new school buildings to reach the prospective students. Salaries of teachers, purchase of supplies, and general upkeep would have to be added annually to the national budget in addition to the initial outlay for the erection of school buildings. Here one comes up immediately against the unyielding fact of the puny national income. Its $7,000,000 could under no circumstances be stretched to cover an architectural program commensurate with Haiti's educational needs.

871 178 Another good reason for the failure of democratic education is the demonstrated apathy of the masses. In the zeal for improvement during the early days of the Occupation, rural schools were estab-

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These figures seem moderately impressive by comparison with those of 1875; but a government report of 1931 states[22] that of the 361 rural schools visited by investigators, 89 had no seats for their pupils, and 157 had only from one to three benches; 122 had neither desks nor tables upon which the pupils might work; 341 had no maps. Of the total number of 977 benches found in all the rural schools, 303 were almost unusable, and of the 26 maps in existence, 13 were entirely beyond use. Of the 355 teachers examined, 257 could not read, and 278 could not add, subtract, multiply, or divide. The average monthly salary was 32.07 gourdes, or $6.21. Of the 17,679 pupils enrolled in rural schools, only 4,022 attended. In this same report President Vincent claims to have made a radical reform in all these matters. His rural teachers are trained, many of them at the government agricultural school at Damien; school equipment has been distributed; salaries have been raised to 65 gourdes, or $13.

The American Occupation showed itself keen to assist education, but unintentionally the measures taken by the whites ran afoul of politics to a serious degree. The excellent agricultural experiment school at Damien was filled with élite students who attended it, in the opinion of many, chiefly in order to receive the scholarships offered; moreover, the class question was raised and bitterly argued: Should peasant students live and study with the élite, and should the curriculum be the same for both? Finally, education was one of the few matters not specifically included in the treaty between Haiti and the United States as under American direction. The result was unhappy: the Occupation was accused of setting up a rival educational "system" to that of the government. Even Bellegarde, most of whose ideas the Americans were trying to carry out, found himself in opposition, chiefly as a result of methods and political implications involved.

If only the budget of the country could be increased, one feels that the rural educational problem might be dealt with, for more and more people are aware of what education might do for the country. Even so, there are still many élite who betray their fear that with education the masses will desert the land and cease to be subservient.

That the élite, who in fact control the country, should receive a training which would fit them for technical skills is a proposal often

22. "*L'Oeuvre d'éducation rurale du gouvernement du Président Vincent*" (Imprimerie de l'État, Port-au-Prince, 1936).

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87/ heard among the more thoughtful.[23] The whole country is teeming
● 565 with opportunities for engineers, doctors, foresters, agronomists, for scientists and specialists of all kinds. Instead of training themselves for such careers the average young men still hanker after the purely honorific career of law, which may lead to governmental posts. A cultured Haitian in 1920 told Dr. Carl Kelsey: "Those of us who have been trained have never been trained to work physically; we do not believe in it; we have no respect for it. We have got to go into the government service; that is the only outlet for any large number of us."[24] And so the average élite boy goes on with his classical training which fits him for nothing but cultured leisure.[25]

23. See especially J. Price-Mars, *La Vocation de l'élite* (Port-au-Prince, 1919), pp. 51 ff.

24. Quoted in Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

[87] [565] 25. In the examinations there is often bribery and other dishonesty, according to credible informants. Some of the élite youths seem to feel that because their fathers hold governmental posts they themselves should be passed, no matter what their showing; and not all teachers have fortitude enough to resist the pressure of important parents, for they fear reprisals in the form of dismissal.

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XVI

PROBLEMS OF THE ÉLITE

TO associate for any length of time with the upper classes of Haitian society is to be aware of a deep unrest, which social charm may cover for the most part, but which inadvertently reveals itself. One discovers a large number of topics which had better not be discussed at all, for they bring a look of distress, wariness, or nervous tension to the face of one's host. To generalize from personal experience is dangerous, if not futile; the present section, therefore, must be read with skepticism. The writer has rarely passed more thoroughly delightful and stimulating hours than in the homes of Haitians. It must not be considered any reflection upon these kindly persons, consequently, if he notes that many of them seemed always to be taking care to guard their faces and their words, lest by look or speech they might be betrayed. What lies behind that guard? What worries the élite?

Sensitivity to the opinion of the white world, first of all. The cultured Haitians know that white people generally are inclined to think of all dark-skinned people as Negroes, all originally from Africa, the Dark Continent of superstition, cannibalism, and savagery; they know it to be commonly held that the Negro is mentally inferior to the white, incapable of first-rate achievement in any art or science, always on the verge of a lapse back into barbarism; and they know that in large parts of the white world social lines are firmly held against the Negro. On the other hand, they have been brought up in cultured homes, where stress has always been laid upon things of the intellect. Good manners, correct speech, decorum, social *savoir-faire*—all these and other ingredients of gentle living the élite children have known since infancy, in their homes and in their social circle. It is expected that a person will know what is going on in Paris, will have read the new novels, will be able to talk about philosophical tendencies and intellectual currents.

In other words, the élite man knows that he is a cultured gentleman in the truest sense. For years he has seen tourist ships landing hundreds of Americans each week at Port-au-Prince and Cap-Haïtien; he has seen the mad revelry of some of these whites, their

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565 829 ill-mannered vulgarity, their superficiality of mind, their poor taste. He knows well enough that it is not fair to judge a whole nation by a few representatives, yet it is clear to him that these raucous whites regard themselves, and are by others regarded, as lords of creation who need never worry about social acceptance. The Haitian knows himself the superior of most of these white people, whether the test be intellectual or on the basis of gentility. Nevertheless, the white inferior is preferred by all the world to his Haitian superior. The white American can go anywhere and, with his carefree self-assurance, see all doors open to him; the cultured Haitian can go few places away from home, and in even those few many doors are yet closed in his face.

Whether the result of his reflections, which must be provoked anew each time the tourist invasion begins, leads him to bitterness or to cynical acceptance depends upon his temperament. It would be almost impossible not to envy the assurance of the white man. And what must life be like when the thought of one's birth, over which one had no control, forever rises as a spectre to haunt one's daily awareness?

Distress of mind may lead the élite in public to impassioned defense of Haitian achievement, but in private he will be all the while imitating the white man and accepting his judgments. The word "ambivalence" is descriptive of his attitude: he wishes to go both ways, to justify Haiti, yet to be regarded as white. Haitian tradition pulls him in one direction, white superiorities the other. There is probably not a single member of the élite who does not feel as if half life's burdens would disappear if only one were white. The darker complexion is one of those hard facts which simply cannot be got around. But one's children can be lighter, and one's grandchildren lighter still, if one marries wisely.

565 55 This is a hope of the future. Meantime there is a pattern of behavior for the present. What has made the white man master of the Western World seems to have been a combination of money, political power, intellectual attainment, and social domination of inferiors. After these, therefore, the proper youth must strive indefatigably. Since these aims are common to the élite they are hardly mentioned; indeed, one wonders sometimes whether even the people themselves are aware of the foundations of their ambition.

No élite man in Haiti ever made money by working with his

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hands. In colonial times fortunes came to plantation owners, and since then have come only to political officeholders. With money one can go to France where he will be accepted as a human being, not turned aside as a Negro; with money one can get an education, live a life of leisure, acquire luxuries. Hence the popularity of law as a profession, for it is the career by which one enters politics. That a president should begin life as an impecunious barrister and end it as a well-to-do landlord, the owner of several villas and motorcars, seems praiseworthy, natural, logical. The American success story is "from log cabin to White House," but with no implication of monetary gain from such progress; the Haitian success story is rather "from penury to plutocracy."

It is not enough, however, to aim high in the material sphere. In proportion to their numbers the élite are extraordinarily ambitious for intellectual achievement. A distinction is sometimes made between the social élite and the intellectual élite, the former being decidedly more numerous.[1] Conversation in a Haitian drawing room is likely to be on about the same intellectual plane as in America except in specifically literary and artistic circles. Poetry, philosophy, literary trends, historical speculation are staples of discussion in more than a few homes. A recent president wrote many metaphysical poems. An American author, attending a social function consisting chiefly of secretaries of state, was amazed to find the group absorbed in a dispute about poetry.[2]

Aristocrats have always kept the lower orders at a distance socially. In Haiti this rule is observed with rigor. To suggest that a possible reason for such harshness of attitude and behavior toward servants and working people might be fear lest white visitors should class all persons of color together would be unkind, though not unsound. In general, there is a deep conviction that the masses are stupid. Although persons of culture exist who are generally solicitous for the betterment of their life, there is really no comparison which will make clear to the white reader the ordinary attitude of mind of

1. This distinction is clearly made in John Lobb, "Caste and Class in Haiti," *American Journal of Sociology*, XLVI, No. 1 (July, 1940), p. 30 ff.

2. W. B. Seabrook, *The Magic Island*, p. 161. "On my way home from the palace," concludes the author, "I reflected how queer it would seem for a group of cabinet ministers and Treasury officials at the White House to be earnestly discussing the poetry of an American anthology which included metaphysical love-lyrics by Calvin Coolidge."

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élite toward *les noirs*. The mildest expression of general opinion is that it would be a waste of time to try to educate the masses, for they are so nearly like animals that they could not absorb even the simplest education. Peasants eat when they are hungry, rise and go to sleep with light and darkness, are unable to count, like animals sense changes in weather; peasants are kindly but stupid, like donkeys: this is the kind of summary one hears from the mouths of the élite. It is possible that the élite are merely imitating the attitude toward the Negro of many white people they have seen.

[466]

Treatment of servants is revealing. They are often reviled for their thickheadedness. When one remonstrates with an employer for his frequent upbraiding of workmen, there is sure to be a look of pained surprise. Said one man: "You can no more hurt the feelings of a peasant than you can hurt the feelings of a mule." Servants simply do not feel as human beings do, but must be "broken," like a horse. This is not to say that many kindly employers do not exist, but rather that working people are not regarded as belonging to the higher orders of nature. A Catholic priest who devoted a good part of his time to work in the hills was told by some of his élite parishioners that this was a waste of time, for such dull people could not possibly benefit from his teachings.

Thoughtful men, on the other hand, know well enough that it is possible to improve the lot of the people. But if the peasant should be well educated he would become ambitious; where then would be the monopoly which is now held by the aristocrats on wealth, government, education? Merest self-interest prompts one to defend the status quo. This definitely worries many of the upper group. Aware that so long as conditions remain as they are Haiti will be poor and backward, they are nevertheless not ready to promote what would be a thoroughgoing social revolution. If any government should become oversolicitous for the well-being of the masses, it would soon find itself bitterly opposed by the upper class. In the long run, what will be the result of keeping things as they are? Élite who know their history can find several possible answers, no one of which appeals to them: a peasants' revolt, a Reign of Terror, intervention by a foreign power. They are on the horns of a dilemma: if as rulers they promote material welfare, they lose their present positions of security; if they do not promote a change, violent change will unseat them.

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merly. Wherever the overcrowded Haitians have lived since 1815, there beauty has had to give way to gnawing necessity which lacked either the imagination or the means to be sightly.

One can stand upon a morne and watch a rain storm rush down the valley, bending the palm trees in its fury, and think Haiti still a magnificent sight. Then one must descend the mountainside past rickety shacks and rocky fields, and the feeling grows that not all the kindly simplicity of the people is enough to lift the country from its dilapidation. As he nears the village, the afternoon scent of roasting coffee will delight him; but then he sees the squalor of village life and is reminded that three million souls are here trying to eke out an existence upon a small area of declining fertility.

Much in Haiti is picturesque if one can keep his mind from wandering to the conditions which lie behind the picturesqueness. Women stride down from the hills with great loads on their heads; aged crones, pipe in mouth, sit perched on the haunches of tiny donkeys with their bulging panniers; the great market square in the town is a scene of noisy confusion with hundreds of women and children, a mixture of smells, thousands of little piles of soap, candy, gewgaws, vegetables, gaping chickens tied together by the feet, shirts, canes, bolts of cloth. All the weary women, however, must trudge back up to their shanties on the mountainside when the market is over. Many of them do not see ten dollars in cash during the year, and their little children, with bellies bulging, give evidence of undernourishment. Without doctors, without even the rudiments of hygiene, they manage somehow to subsist, or else die, frequently of disease which might easily have been prevented.

In Port-au-Prince and a few other towns live enough members of the élite to make one momentarily forget the plight of the masses. The houses of the well-to-do are substantially built, if not often attractive. Their garden walls are brilliant with bougainvillea, their walks with hibiscus. Tiny red lizards (analis) make flashes of color along the walls. On shady verandas and in the parlors one hears delightful conversation, eats excellent food, savors the pleasures of civilization. The clubs of the élite are pleasing, their tennis is good, their dancing graceful. To be among these families as a welcome guest is an experience in gracious hospitality which can never be forgotten. Too soon, however, one must leave these havens of urbanity and pass through districts of the town which haunt the mind with their grim want.

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the culture of their group, but also none of the broader aspects of the motivating forces, the dominant wishes, the attitudes and social values of the masses. Since the élite have often expressed in books their desires and frustrations, one feels that it would be readily possible for a trained social psychologist to learn much from upper-class informants who are anxious to be understood. To penetrate the inner life of the masses would be easier for an American than for a Haitian scholar, who would be enmeshed in the attitudes of class and caste in his own society.

Little has been said in this book of the small group of people, generally living in towns, who belong neither to the élite nor to the masses. How much actual social mobility occurs? Of the horizontal variety, that is, movement from place to place within the same social class, very little; of the vertical, or transition from one social class to another, there is likewise little, as has been shown at length in this book; yet there is enough to make a study of social mobility useful. Allied with such an investigation might be one of social distance. The degree of sympathy existing between élite and masses is small; on the other hand, one longs to know the degree of social distance of the individuals who are not yet élite but who regard themselves as definitely superior to the masses: what is their attitude toward the class they have left? And what is the attitude of the élite toward their aspirations?

Certain studies have already been made of the effect of the Vodun religion upon the personalities of its practitioners.[6] Even here the surface has been merely skimmed.

Haiti, because she is a colored nation in a white Western World, has been even more isolated than she would otherwise have been, even with her island position and her economic poverty. Except for the presence of American Marines for nineteen years there has been little cultural contact with outsiders, and hence little cultural conflict. It is generally estimated that there are not more than three thousand white people living in Haiti, and these mostly in the capital city. Throughout the nineteenth century it is likely that there were fewer. Haiti shares the island with the Dominican Republic, yet since the independence of the Dominicans in 1844 there has been little warfare, travel, or contact between the two peoples. Haitian workers have crossed the border, it is true, and have returned home (or have

6. See particularly Price-Mars, *Ainsi parla l'oncle*, and Dorsainvil, *Vodou et névrose*.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

[p. 315]

NOTES

CHAPTER II

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The period between 1789 and 1803 may be summarized as follows:

1789–1791. Struggle for precedence between whites and free colored people, with the balance in favor of the whites. [565]

1791–1793. The slave insurrection, with consequent anarchy, and futile attempts of French commissioners to restore order. Both whites and colored people pushed into the background. [669] [563]

1793–1796. Invasion of the colony by English and Spanish; rise of the mulatto general Rigaud and the black general Toussaint. [648]

1796–1799. Consolidation of power by Toussaint; defeat and expulsion of Rigaud; emigration of whites. [643]

1799–1802. Toussaint in full power as governor-general.

1802–1803. Leclerc's expedition, with its initial successes and ultimate failure. Final achievement of Haitian independence under Dessalines and Christophe. [642]

PART III

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Various efforts were made by American abolitionists working with Haitian presidents to colonize freed American Negro slaves in Haiti in the period before the Civil War.[1] All these projects came to unfortunate ends, some even to grimly tragic ones. During Boyer's time about 13,000 American Negroes went to Haiti, the government assigning to each family a portion of land upon its arrival. Very shortly most of those who could afford it returned to this country, and within ten years hardly one was still living upon the land. An American writer, Hunt, says that during his seventeen years in Haiti (before 1860) he had known of but 13 Negroes from America who had been moderately successful; of these, 7 were merchants or traders, 4 mechanics, and 2 lawyers; and all were mulattoes. Five others were barely independent, and all the rest were day laborers or worse. In spite of this, Hunt planned another aided migration of American Negroes to Haiti. Warning them not to expect too much in the way of improvements in agriculture, he adds a significant paragraph: "Should the immigrant obtain quiet possession of unoccupied lands, and begin to use the plough instead of the hoe, his new methods of culture would be likely to draw upon him the jealousy and ill-will of his neighbors. For when new ways are *too* new to be accepted as an example, they are very apt to be felt and resented as a rebuke. More than one of Boyer's old immigrants have told me that they were obliged to give up agriculture and take to trading in towns, on account of annoyances of this sort. They found their fences down, or their water let off, of a morning; or evidences that cattle had been fed on their grounds over night; or the neighboring idlers, of which there are many, had stolen all their plantains and sweet potatoes, fit for the market. I do not mean to say that these Haytian cultivators are worse than any other rude people. On the contrary, I

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1. An excellent description of these projects is found in L. L. Montague, *Haiti and the United States, 1714–1938* (Durham, 1940), chap. IV.